

Jamie White

Throughout college, students take a variety of courses which help them gain an understanding in a particular subject. Courses range from general electives to their required courses for their field of study. As a communication studies major I have taken many courses which have helped me apply their concepts and ideas to the working world. I have also applied the concepts and ideas to other courses which have helped me excel in the array of courses I have studied. Intercultural and persuasion communication have been two courses I felt have benefitted me in school. The material I learned can also help me excel in a job and the real world.

First, the course in persuasion taught me many theories, concepts, and effects that can be applied to everyday life and for a range of items. Persuasion is communication that is intended to do one of three things: shape, reinforce, or change cognitive, affective or behavioral responses. We can change our thinking or beliefs, our emotions and feelings or actions. This course teaches many theories and concepts that will be beneficial in certain situations. Persuasion can be used in health, organizations and the environment. It can be used in small groups like a jury or in mass communication like the public or billboards. Throughout life we are going to need to use persuasion, whether it is your job or using it on friends. Understanding and applying these concepts will allow to you to be successful in your task. Two important focuses that we learned that I felt were important were emotional/fear appeals and sequential request. Emotional appeals tap into people's emotions by using fear, guilt, pity, humor or humiliation as just a few examples of the emotions we try to target. Fear appeals target three things, fear which is negative and can be psychological, threat, and feasible recommendation to deter. It is important to see how these appeals can be used to persuade people. I also learned that fear appeals tend not to work for ages

13-25 which is very important to recognize. Emotional and fear appeals are very important and can one day improve your performance at work or another activity. As companies use mass media or sales to try and sell a product, they use these appeals to get to their target audience. It is important to understand these methods because they can be applied to your job one day.

For example, if I get a job in advertising and need to create a television commercial about underage drinking, understanding these appeals will help you be successful in targeting your audience and getting your message across. If you take the fear appeal approach and look at threat, how can I get across to teenagers that underage drinking is bad? How do I make them aware? Advertising a commercial that has teenagers at a party drinking, then a girl or boy passes out on the couch in front of the entire party and as he or she is asleep people draw on her face. This is a great example how I can apply fear appeals in my advertising commercial. When teenagers see the commercial they do not want to look like the girl or boy who is passed out with marker on their face, they do not want to look stupid and see that it can do harm to them. After watching the commercial I got the message across to all teenagers that underage drinking is bad and there are consequences for their actions.

Another example that can be used in the work place is if I was working for a company and needed to come up with a design that will be printed in a magazine. A company like Trojan uses emotional appeals by tapping into someone's emotions by using humor. I come up with a design that has a humorous logo, picture, or phrase. I still get their message across, but I do it in the way that has the viewer laughing but also do this to make people aware of condoms in a funny way to make people see that people do use them and you do not have to be ashamed of using or buying them. This helps to break up the different emotions companies use to advertise.

The other concept that I felt was important and beneficial was sequential request. For this concept there are two requests, foot in the door and door in the face. Foot in the door is a small request where most people will comply with the bigger request which is the one we want, it establishes a commitment. This request has a bigger consistency and works because people feel that they should follow-up for consistency. It involves securing compliance from a target on a small request and then making a larger request. Then there is door in the face which is a larger request, you expect them to say no, pro social messages are more effective. This request is more effective when the second request falls close to first request. Learning these requests can be beneficial for people who are involved with sales and even people who are helping in any fundraiser.

For example, if I worked for a company that is having a fundraiser to help cancer patients, and they have me go to different homes or business to raise money for the cause, using these requests will help people comply with my message. Going to a house or business and asking for a small donation, maybe around ten dollars, is using foot in the door. They comply and your request is complete. Then, shortly after the first request, I go back to the same home or business and ask for a larger donation, say around 100 dollars, now they are more likely to follow the request under the door in the face request. I have effectively gone at a smaller distance to the first request and they feel as though they should follow-up with the first request they made. This will help me to perform better at my job but also raise the money. Learning these requests will benefit me in the amount of people and money I get from each home or business. Without learning this I would not be aware of making the two request and would have went one time to the home or business asked for a large request and most likely would have been turned down, which meant not performing my job to the fullest and not raising the money.

After completing the communication studies course in Intercultural Communication I was able to learn important terminology and concepts that can be applied across many cultures. We studied culture which is defined as a set of beliefs, values, norms, customs, rules, and codes that guide a group of people's behaviors, which create a sense of belonging. After analyzing the definition of culture and grasping the idea in the beginning, then we were able to apply that to the definition of intercultural communication. This is defined as at least two people from different cultures exchanging verbal and non verbal symbols. Once we were capable of understanding which each term meant we were able to apply the meanings to the different concepts as well as the different cultures. This course allowed me to understand the different cultural patterns both verbally and nonverbally and the patterns of communication. I was able to learn about each culture individually, what their beliefs, values, and norms were as an entire culture and was able to appreciate value them. It opened my eyes and allowed me to see how different each and every culture is. There are many aspects that we should learn, not only gain knowledge about the people around us, appreciate the many cultures we have in this world and show respect for one another.

This course allows you to enter their world and view it in their eyes. In today's society we are seeing a rapid increase in the amount of companies who are taking their business worldwide. Not only have we seen many companies expand their business outside of the United States, but we are also seeing many businesses working with personnel outside the United States in many countries. Having a clear understanding of the culture as well as the people you are working with, allows for strong communication and a positive experience for both people. Hofestede's dimensions of culture demonstrate a culture's cultural patterns and their way of communication. There are six dimensions: individualism, collectivism, power distance,

uncertainty avoidance, masculinity, and femininity. It is important to recognize what each one means and how each culture see them differently. In many cultures collectivism is followed. As a family or group their national needs are valued more than individual needs. Many Asian and south American countries follow collectivism. On the other hand, individualism reaches out for individual achievement and is valued more. People also tend to look out for themselves rather than others.

You also have to realize how cultures view masculinity and femininity. Masculinity value assertiveness, achievement, wealth, dominant and competitiveness and have more aggressive communication, where as femininity values relationships and life quality. Feminine cultures are more nurturing, compassionate, and sensitive. Grasping these dimensions will help me in the work world. The United States has people of many different cultures and if I am going to be working with these potential people understanding their beliefs will help me have better communication with them. When they are more competitive or dominant in something, I can acknowledge that they are more masculine in their work. If I need to travel to other countries for work and need to work together with them on a particular project, knowing that their culture uses collectivism to complete tasks will help me perform with them. In the United States we are used to working independently most of the time. Traveling to other countries I will know how to work as a group to get things done. It is important to work as they do, working independently will cause a barrier between the two people. They strive to work together and feel as though everyone has a part so by approaching the situation with the understanding that they work together will benefit everyone.

As I am completing my last semester there have been many courses outside of communication studies which I have gained knowledge in my education here. I have taken classes

that deal with science, women's studies, and business courses to name a few. Each one of them have showed me a new perspective on the topic and have really showed me how to apply what I learned to real life and how I can use it for years to come. It's allowed me to help out others and teach them the things that I have learned. The great part of general elective classes allows students to learn about so many different subjects. Without having these be mandatory, there was a great chance that I would not have been able to learn such good information and have such a better look on each topic. Some classes have given me a perspective on things I never knew about. It has allowed me to be grateful for what I have and what I have accomplished. It also makes me realize the struggles people have now and back then, as well as what people have done for us to be where we are today and the way we are able to live.

These classes have also helped me to excel where I work. As a receptionist at a doctor's office, I work with people everyday, with different ages, races, and ethnicities. After taking some of my classes I was able to apply what I learned to how I can communicate with an individual or group, communicating with a particular culture or a particular age effectively. I gained the knowledge to approach the person or situation in the matter how it should be taken. For example, many Indian couples come into the office together, but the husband does all the talking or the husband will call for his wife. At first it was frustrating for me to understand why, because there were times where I needed to speak to the wife since she knew how she was feeling but the husband had to do the talking. There were times where he didn't know the information that I needed and would have to call back several times. Until I took my intercultural class I was very confused and frustrated how they handled the situation, now I understand that is their culture, their beliefs and their way of living. It allowed me to see that this is how they live and to appreciate and respect them. It is now much easier for me to

communicate with them and have an understanding of their culture and see why the husbands are the ones who take control.

Another example that benefits me in my work place is the use of persuasion. There have been many times where our office has had to cancel or change an appointment and sometimes the patient does not want to wait for the next appointment with their physician. However, I am now able to use my persuasion skills to persuade them to see another physician or go to another office. This benefits me because they are not yelling and giving me a hard time, but it also benefits them because they are able to be seen when they want. In this case both people are satisfied. I have also used persuasion when the physician is running behind. Many patients hate to wait and get very impatient, but my persuading them to stay and telling them the benefits of waiting, like they do not need to come back again, allows me to get across to them and they decide to wait. I have used many skills learned throughout my courses while I am working. It has allowed me to excel and accomplish more.

I just recently joined the West Virginia Women's Club Lacrosse team. So far it has been a great experience. I have made new friends and as a team we work together whether it is on the field or a team bonding exercise, together everyone works as one. We know there is no I in team, so when one person messes up, we all mess up. This has helped us come together and work as one team and bond from each experience. We take part in fundraisers which allows us to fund the team, but also help out the community. One fundraiser we are doing is helping out the younger players who want to learn how to play the game of lacrosse. We will be taking time with them to coach and show them the skills and techniques they should use to help them become better lacrosse players. Not only do we get to help out others, but we also get to work as a team outside of practice or games and allow us to enjoy the friendships and time we have with

one another. We are also forming relationships with other people and business by taking part in this fundraiser. Since we have formed good relationships, show dedication, and commitment to these particular people and businesses, it will benefit the lacrosse team as a whole, not only for this year but years to come. The people and business will be more willing to donate money and let us participate in fundraisers because we have established such a good program and are proud of what we do. Participating in this club has showed me what it is like to be in a team and have fun with the people doing it with me. It is a fun and exciting experience.

In conclusion, many of my coursework and experiences have benefited me in school and work. The concepts and theories taught have been very helpful to perform efficiently and effectively at my current job and will help me excel with a job in the future. Many of the communication courses I have taken are related to the real world and helped me gain knowledge to the different aspects there are with communication. Overall, every class has allowed me to taken something out of it and apply it to work or school. They have shown me how to communicate with older adults to communicating nonverbally. The skills and concepts I have learned will go with me everywhere and has shown me that when applying them I can be successfully and excel in what I do.