

## Syllabus for Short Course: Teaching Persuasion: a Revolt

### I. Presenters:

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There is significant dissent from extant Persuasion books concerning what persuasion is and how professors can effect and affect its teaching. The view of persuasion presented in this course is exemplified in Vatz's article and book respectively, "The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation" (*Philosophy and Rhetoric*, Summer: 2003) and *The Only Authentic Book of Persuasion* (Kendall Hunt, 2012, 2013). This short course attempts to present a new paradigm for teaching and understanding this critical Communication Studies topic. Participant interaction will be encouraged throughout with discussion of this new model. By the end of the short course, the attendees will be able to understand and apply the "Salience-Agenda/Meaning-Spin" model of Persuasion, sometimes shortened to the "Agenda-Spin" model. Specifically, they will master the "Seminal Assignment" for the course, an assignment that has won thousands of adherents over to this new perspective on persuasion.

### II. Course Description:

The short course will present a new paradigm for Persuasion and Rhetoric. Attendees will be able to explain how persuasion is effected – why some persuasion succeeds and some fails; why some is sustainable and some is not; and what persuasive goals are possible and what persuasive goals are impossible.

The course will explicate the Persuasion and Rhetoric Salience-Agenda/Meaning-Spin theory and a new Persuasion course's "Article Rewrite Assignment." This new approach has implications that with some elaboration, according to University of Pittsburgh Emeritus Professor of Rhetoric Trevor Melia, "could well replace much that passes for rhetorical theory today."

### III. Schedule:

- A. Lecture-discussion of the new model of persuasion and how and why it differs from traditional models.
- B. Discussion of “The Seminal Assignment” for Persuasion through rhetorical reversals of article sentences and paragraphs.(1)

1. “[Vatz’s] renowned Article Rewrite Assignment, which is the most brilliant communication exercise I’ve ever come across, clearly and powerfully demonstrates how human beings create meaning in discourse, from our everyday conversations to the news we share to the President’s State of the Union address.”

Harrison Monarth, *The New York Times Bestselling author*  
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