



PS 312. Political Persuasion

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Syllabus

➤ Is available on C-Tools site.

Outline for Today

- Overview
- Class Rules and Regulations
- Introduction to Relevant Science and Logic

What is persuasion?





VinceOffer.net

Definition: persuasion (O'Keefe)

- "When we say that one person persuaded another, we ordinarily identify a successful attempt to influence."
- "the usual implication drawn...is that the persuader has some intention of achieving the persuasive goal."
- There is "some measure of freedom on the persuadee's part"
- "the effects are achieved through communication"

Persuasion attempts

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PERSUASION
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Definition: persuasion

- “paradigm cases of persuasion involve a change in the mental state of the persuadee
 - (principally as a precursor to a change in behavior).”
- “the relevant mental state has most commonly been characterized as an *attitude*”
- “attitude
 - An “orientation of mind”
 - “a person’s general evaluation of an object”

What is political persuasion?

Mutz, Sniderman, and Brody (1996)

- "Politics, at its core is about persuasion.
- It hinges not just on whether citizens at any moment in time tend to favor one side of an issue over another,
- but on the numbers of them that can be brought, when push comes to shove,
- from one side to the other or, indeed, induced to leave the sidelines in order to take a side....."

Mutz, Sniderman, and Brody (1996)

- "Politics is about turning minorities of today into majorities of tomorrow..."
- "...and the risk as well as the strength of democratically contested politics lies precisely in its openness to change."

Mutz, Sniderman, and Brody (1996)

“Persuasion is ubiquitous in the political process.”



Political persuasion questions

- How are peoples' desires related to the actions of government?
- By what communicative means do people attempt to affect such relationships?
- Under what conditions can you be persuasive politically?

What content counts as
political?

What governments do

➤ Inputs

- Public support
- A means of coercion
- A means of collecting revenue

➤ Outputs

- Public goods
- Private goods. If I have it, you cannot.

What is a Public Good?

- A public good
 - may be enjoyed by anyone if it is provided and
 - may not be denied to anyone once it has been provided.
- The implication of “free riding”
 - Without incentives or coercion, public goods are underprovided.
 - To provide public goods, governments need public support, a means of coercion and a means of revenue.

Governments...

- Maintain order
- Protect property
- Promote economic growth
- Redistribute wealth
- Ensure safety of food, drugs, clothing, housing, etc.
- Educate children and citizens
- Protect basic civil and political rights
 - Each combines public and private goods.

The Tension of Politics

- Governments affect who gets what.
- A government is usually unable to do everything that everyone wants them to do.
 - Financial constraints
 - Logical constraints
- How do governments choose?
 - How are individual desires translated into governmental actions?

Mutz, Sniderman, and Brody (1996)

- “Politics is about turning minorities of today into majorities of tomorrow...”

Format: Three Acts

- Act 1: Persuasion (January & February)
 - Scientific foundations of political persuasion
- Act 2: Politics (March)
 - Issue-specific development of persuasive techniques
- Act 3: Performance (April)
 - Full-scale persuasive experiences

Our focus

- Different than in the press
 - Journalists seek “a story”
 - Pundits need attention to keep their jobs, but have little or no accountability.
- We draw from a scientific knowledge base
 - We examine the relationship between
 - the information to which people are exposed,
 - the knowledge and feelings that information produces,
 - and the ways in which these changes affect behavior.

Successful Persuasion

- Information →
- Changes in knowledge and feelings →
- Changes in behavior

Reality

- Most persuasive attempts fail.
- How can we succeed where others have failed?

Administrative Matters

Dates and Grades

- Initial Proposal 5%
- Midterm 20%
- Section Participation 20%
- Class Participation (Acts II and III) 15%
- Your Final Campaign Presentation (group grade) 20%
- Ratings of Project Partners 5%
- Final Report on Your Campaign Strategy (written by you alone) 15%

The Final Presentation

- You will be a member of a 4-5 person team.
- Your team will develop a persuasive campaign and present it to the entire class.
- You will have up to ten minutes to make your presentation.

Grades

- Your grade is based on performance.
- If you want a good grade
 - Read before class & section.
 - Be present and attentive.
 - Section: Come prepared. Answer questions. Participate in discussions and debates.

Default Grading Plan

- A curve:
 - at least 30% A,
 - 70% A or B,
 - 90% A,B, or C
- I will examine the final distribution of numerical grades and look for gaps.
- You can fail if you want to.

Requirements

- Class meets Monday and Wednesday afternoons.
 - Sections meet once per week.
- There are two required textbooks.
 - All are available in paperback
 - You can buy them used but you must have the correct edition.
- All other readings are available on C-Tools.

The GSI's

- Logan Casey
- Geoff Lorenz

- Sections begin on Thursday, 1/16.

- Presentation teams will be organized within sections.

Admissions News

- If you are not yet admitted to PS 312 or to the section you desire...
- The University's agreement with the graduate student union places strict limits on section sizes.
- If a section is full you can be admitted only if a currently enrolled student drops.
 - Students tend to drop courses after the first week.
 - The official waiting list is the one on Wolverine Access

Rules

- No phone calls during class.
- Unless otherwise instructed, electronic devices are allowed for course-related activity only.
- If you are using an electronic device for *any other purpose* during lecture, you can be expelled from that session of the class.

Rules

- Papers are due at the beginning of class on stated due dates.
 - If you are going to be absent, turn it in early.
 - Waiting until the last minute is risky for you.

Rules

- We accept only official UM requests for alternate test dates and absences from section.
 - Requests for change must list dates out of town.
 - Requests for midterm change must be submitted by February 3.

My Office Hours/Websites

- Haven Hall 6757
- Tuesdays 1-3

My website: www.umich.edu/~lupia

Twitter: @ArthurLupia

Logic and Argument

Also see

<http://www.fallacyfiles.org>

Your basic problem

- Where are they?
 - Who is your target audience?
 - What factual premises/truth claims will they accept.
- Where do they want to be?
 - Which alternate conclusion will benefit them?
 - What burden of proof and standard of evidence do they impose?

Main ideas

- "An argument is a connected series of premises intended to establish a conclusion."
- Argument is an intellectual process. Contradiction is just the automatic gainsaying of any statement the other person makes.

Arguments

- The currency of political communication.
- The components of an argument are:
 - The Conclusion
 - The Premises
- Value comes from explaining as much as possible with as little as possible.

Introduction to Logic

➤ Conclusion

- The conclusion is what the argument is trying to prove.

➤ Premise

- The premises are given as reasons for the conclusion.
- Initial premises are offered without proof.

Introduction to Logic

➤ Deductive Validity

- If all of the premises are true, then the conclusion must be true.
- An argument in which the logical connection between premises and conclusion is one of necessity.

Examples

- Barack Obama is a man.
- Barack Obama is over 5' 11'' tall.
- All men who are over 5' 11'' tall are the president.
- Therefore, Barack Obama is the president.

Introduction to Logic

➤ Inductive Validity

- If all of the premises are true, then the conclusion may be true.
- An argument in which the logical connection between premises and conclusion is one of possibility.

Examples

- Barack Obama is a man.
- Barack Obama is over 5' 11'' tall.
- *Some* men who are over 5' 11'' tall are the president.
- Therefore, Barack Obama is the president.

Introduction to Logic

➤ Invalid

- If all of the premises are true, then the conclusion **must be false**.
- An argument in which the logical connection between premises and conclusion is one of impossibility.

Examples

- Barack Obama is a man.
- Barack Obama is over 5' 11'' tall.
- If a man is over 5' 11'' tall, then he is not the president.
- Therefore, Barack Obama is the president.

Examples

- Random premise 1
- Random premise 2
- Therefore, Barack Obama is the president.

The value of logic in political debate

- How to cast doubt on the reliability of a conclusion when an argument has the following logical properties:
- Invalid:
 - If the premises are believed to be true, then reveal the logical relationship.
- Inductively valid:
 - show that even if the premises are true the conclusion can be false or demonstrate that one or more of the premises is untrue.
- Deductively valid:
 - demonstrate that one or more of the premises is untrue.

Common Standards

➤ Soundness

- Waller (p 20), The argument "must be [deductively] valid *and* all of its premises must actually be true."

➤ Reliability

- Waller (p 21). "[A]n inductive argument with all true premises, and whose premises strongly support its conclusion, will be a *reliable* inductive argument."

- These standards are more subjective.

Logical Fallacy: Denying the Antecedent

- If it's raining, then the streets are wet.
- It isn't raining.
- Therefore, the streets aren't wet.

Logical Fallacy: Affirming the Consequent

- If it's raining then the streets are wet.
- The streets are wet.
- Therefore, it's raining.

Logical Fallacy: Commutation of Conditionals

- If James was a bachelor, then he was unmarried.
- Therefore, if James was unmarried, then he was a bachelor.

Logical Fallacy: Denying a Conjunct

- It isn't both sunny and overcast.
 - It isn't sunny.
 - Therefore, it's overcast.
-
- Not both **p** and **q**.
 - Not **p**.
 - Therefore, not **q**.

Necessity and Sufficiency

➤ Necessity

- A is a necessary condition for B.
- For B to be possibly true, I must show that A is true.

➤ Sufficiency

- A is a sufficient condition for B.
- If I show that A is true, then B must be true

"The Cause"

- For B to be "the cause" of A, it must be necessary and sufficient.
- If B is sufficient but not necessary, then A can have other causes.
- If B is necessary but not sufficient, then B cannot cause A on its own.

Implications for You

- Think of the readings, lectures, and presentations as arguments.
- Try to detect the premises and conclusions.
- In addition to thinking about whether the premises and conclusions are true, think about relationships between them.

For Section...

- Describe an instance in which you were persuaded by a politician or about a political issue. Be sure to identify the politician or issue and describe what you found persuasive.
- Length: 200 words maximum.
- Due: 1/16 at 10pm via CTools (assignments).
- Come to section on 1/17 prepared to tell us a little about this persuasion experience.