**Persuasion Paper**

Persuasion tactics are essential for politicians to win votes and support for laws/policies that they want to pass. Because this is a presidential election year, there are many opportunities to see and hear speeches from candidates that use a variety of persuasion tactics.

For your first paper, you are to listen to the either the democratic and republican presidential nominee’s (Obama and McCain) or vice-presidential nominee’s (Biden and Palin) acceptance speeches, or you can listen to one of the Obama/McCain presidential or Palin/Biden vice-presidential debates (not a forum). Some of these are available on YouTube:

- Obama: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZCrleRkMhA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZCrleRkMhA)
- McCain: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OrlkcMOMhrQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OrlkcMOMhrQ)
- Biden: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVH58DeUThg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVH58DeUThg)
- Palin: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t81j_Aup4fo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t81j_Aup4fo)

Debate footage for presidential debate on September 26th or Vice presidential debate on October 2nd should be available here, but may also be available on youtube.


Your task: watch/listen for two things: persuasion tactics and claims that the candidates make, either about their own record, or about their opposing party. There will be many claims, but for this assignment you are to get **at least 5** for each candidate on both sides. You are to then check on the validity of these claims using a non-partisan fact-checking source. You can use one of the following: FactCheck.org, PolitiFact.com, or OnTheIssues.org.

After you have checked on the validity of the claims made by each candidate, you are to write a 3-4 page paper about the persuasion tactics used by each candidate, the audience and how this affected what the candidates may have spoken about, how valid each candidate’s claims are, and your perceived intent that these claims were to have on their audience.

In your paper, address the following questions: What impact were the claims made by each candidate aimed to have? Did the particular audience they were addressing matter? Do you think they would have taken another tactic with another audience? How could each candidate have been more effective with a
different audience? What types of emotions were the candidates trying to evoke in their audience with the claims you selected? What impact do you think this had on their persuasibility? What “source” factors do you think each candidate has that make them persuasive? What “message” factors did they use and do you think they were effective?

This IS NOT, I repeat NOT an opinion paper! This is an academic paper. Although political attitudes are often based on emotion rather than reason, you should do your best to be as objective as possible in your analysis of the two candidates. I don’t want to know who you support and why. The purpose of this paper is to identify the persuasive techniques used by the candidates, and apply your course material to this information.

Therefore, be sure to incorporate terms from your text book or the lecture to support the points in your paper to receive a good grade. You should mention at least one persuasion theory (ELM or HSM), outline the claims and your fact checking of them, and address the specific questions above. The more thorough you are, the better your grade. If you would like some support in writing, you can visit the CSU writing center: http://writing.colostate.edu/wcenter/. No appointment is necessary.