

## **SOC/PSY 530 – FREESE – Reading Guide for *Age of Propaganda***

**Note:** PA refers to the authors (Pratkanis and Aronson). This reading guide is provided as a good faith effort to help you extract key (or interesting) points from the book. It does not in any way constitute a “contract” regarding what from this book will and will not be on any exams.

### **CHAPTER 4 – “The Rationalizing Animal”**

1. How did the Clarion group behave differently after the prophecy failed than they had before? What is the explanation PA give for this?
2. Who are the least likely to believe in the dangers of smoking?
3. What is the rationalization trap?
4. What is the “even-a-penny” trick and why do PA think it works?
5. What is the rationalization trap as it applies to the deaths of enemy civilians in war?

### **CHAPTER 6 – “Words of Influence”**

6. What is the trick implicit in a brand of aspirin claiming “unsurpassed in speed—no other brand works faster”?
7. What was the finding comparing the words “lean” and “fat” in ground beef advertising?
8. Who popularized the term halitosis and what was their brilliant slogan for increasing people’s paranoia that they might have it?
9. What was the original name of the US Department of Defense?
10. What is a self-fulfilling prophecy? (As far as definitions go, PA’s definition is a very good one.)
11. What tactic did Miller, Brickman, and Bolin use *successfully* to get kids to litter less?
12. What was the finding of the experiment described in the bottom half of page 78 that used independent observers? (This is a clever study.)

### **CHAPTER 9 – “Naked Attics and Neighborhood War Heros”**

13. Are vivid appeals more persuasive?
14. What is the finding of “a large body of research by Richard Nisbett and Lee Ross”? (page 174)

15. What is the quotation “The death of a single Russian soldier is a tragedy. A million deaths is a statistic” supposed to illustrate?

#### **CHAPTER 20 – “Why Do They Keep Repeating the Same Ads?”**

16. How do PA suggest a modern day Aesop would revise the moral “familiarity breeds contempt”?

17. Which political candidates tend to gain the most from media exposure? (Page 181-2)

18. The Goebbels quote on Page 182 is remarkable, even if I can’t think of a pithy question to draw attention to it.

19. Does repetition of a piece of information increase its perceived validity?

20. What is the “repetition-with-variation” tactic? How is it supposed to improve upon repetition alone?

#### **CHAPTER 21 – “If You Have Nothing to Say—Distract Them”**

21. What was the finding of the study that had some fraternity members watching an entertaining film and listening to anti-fraternity arguments at the same time? How do PA explain it?

22. According to the “neat little experiment” by Petty, Wells, and Brock, what is the relationship between distraction, the strength of an argument, and its effectiveness?

#### **CHAPTER 24 – “The Fear Appeal”**

23. Why did Dolinski and Nawrat place things under the hoods of illegally parked cars that looked like tickets but weren’t? What did they do next? What did they find? What did they conclude? And what does all this have to do with the interrogation tactics of the Spanish Inquisition?

24. What did Leventhal and colleagues discover about the relationship between self-esteem and the effectiveness of high fear arousal as a persuasion tactic? Why? What does this have to do with how far away you sit subjects away from gory films of automobile accidents?

25. What are the conditions that make fear appeals most effective? (summarized pp. 213-214; more or less the same conditions appear in the MD textbook)

26. An famous ad from the 1964 LBJ campaign shows a girl plucking petals from a daisy. What happens to her next? (this ad actually had more negative fallout—ha, ha—for the LBJ campaign than PA discussion of it would indicate)

#### **CHAPTER 25 – “The Granfalloon Technique” (need only read pp. 216-219)**

27. What is a granfalloon?

28. What did Cialdini and colleagues find out college student attire on autumn Monday mornings?

29. Subjects were led to have a more favorable opinion with Rasputin if they shared what with him?

#### **CHAPTER 26 – “Guilt Sells”**

30. According to the 13-year old who sold 11,200 boxes of cookies, the secret is that you have to look people in the eye and do what to them?

31. In the “fascinating” experiment by Kassin and Kiechel, what did the people who made false confessions confess to doing?

32. What two factors increased the likelihood of false confessions in the Kassin/Kiechel experiments? Which mirrors a common tactic used in police interrogations?

33. According to Carlsmith and Gross, what are the three possible reasons why guilt sells? (Later experiments suggested that one of these does not independently affect compliance.)

34. What is the effect of saying “Don’t worry about it. It’s okay.” on the effectiveness of induced guilt as a tactic for gaining compliance?

#### **CHAPTER 27 – “What is the Influence of One Flower Given?”**

35. What is the norm of reciprocity?

36. How did the Hare Krishna use the norm of reciprocity to increase donations?

37. What is the door-in-the-face technique?

38. What is the “that’s not all” technique?

#### **CHAPTER 34 – “Subliminal Sorcery”**

39. What is the cocktail party phenomenon? What does it demonstrate about information processing that makes it relevant for a chapter on subliminal advertising?

40. What was the design of the experiment involving subliminal self-esteem and memory tapes? (Hint: subjects were randomly assigned to one of four groups.) What did the experiment show about the effectiveness of subliminal messages? What did it show about the perception of the effectiveness of subliminal messages?

#### **CHAPTER 35 – “Persuasion Direct”**

[intended to be used for course exercise]

## **CHAPTER 36 – “How to Become a Cult Leader”**

41. What is “flirty fishing”?
42. What is the criticism that PA offer of the term “brainwashing”?
43. What is at the core of the social relations of the cult? What is the specific pattern of relations that PA present as being definitive of a cult?
44. Should you want to become a cult leader, what is the first step in constructing your own social reality?
45. What is “love-bombing”?
46. According to PA, the Children of God (new religious organization) teaches members to hate whom? (Hint: non-members is not specific enough)
47. Should you want to become a cult leader, what is the rationalization trap that you can use to create commitment?
48. What from the Shoko Asahara (of the Aum Supreme Truth organization) can you supposedly buy for \$7000 a sip?
49. What organization described in this chapter on cults asks new members to decide on their “Dream” (e.g., a new Cadillac or ranch) that they can obtain if they devote their bodies and minds to the organization?

## **CHAPTER 37 – “Propaganda in the Third Reich”**

50. What do PA say was the most striking aspect of British and American propaganda in World War I?
51. What was employed by Goebbels to lessen the sting of state actions like torture and genocide?
52. How did Hitler dress his supporters as he was gaining power?
53. What biographical experience provided the inspiration for Kurt Lewin’s field theory? (Lewin was a pre-eminent figure in early social psychology.)
54. PA sum up their discussion of the propaganda in World War II by saying that it all leads to a single conclusion. What is it?