**Social Judgment Theory**

The key point of the Social Judgment Theory is that attitude change (persuasion) is mediated by judgmental processes and effects. Put differently, persuasion occurs at the end of the process where a person understands a message then compares the position it advocates to the person's position on that issue. A person's position on an issue is dependent on:

1. the person's most preferred position (their anchor point),
2. the person's judgment of the various alternatives (spread across their latitudes of acceptance, rejection, and non-commitment), and
3. the person's level of ego-involvement with the issue.

Consider the course choices available to you next term. For the sake of argument, let's say you have four required courses to finish but have one three credit hour elective remaining. What courses open to you would you definitely not enroll in, no matter what? Those courses fall in your Latitude of Rejection. Do you think anyone could persuade you to take a class that falls in that latitude? Not likely. And, the more ego-involved you are in the decision to enroll in your course (the more you care about that decision) the larger your Latitude of Rejection will be. Persuasive messages that advocate positions in your Latitude of Rejection will be contrasted by you. That is, they will appear to be further away from your anchor point than they actually are. That's not good news for the would-be persuader.

Now consider the courses that you really don't have an opinion about, that you don't have positive or negative feelings toward. Those courses fall in your Latitude of Noncommitment. It's possible that someone could persuade you to enroll in one of those courses, but you'd have to learn more about the course first, at least enough until you an opinion, or judgment, about it.

Now, consider all those courses you would consider enrolling in. Those courses fall in your Latitude of Acceptance. A person with good arguments might be able to persuade you to take one of those courses, especially if, in your judgment, the course is similar to your anchor point course. Persuasive messages that advocate positions in your Latitude of Acceptance will be assimilated by you. That is, they will appear to be closer to your anchor point than they actually are. That's good news for the would-be persuader.

If you are persuaded, then the further a message's position is away from your anchor point, the larger your attitude change will be. But remember that it is very unlikely that you will be persuaded out of your Latitude of Rejection. So, once a message enters that region and moves away from your anchor point, the amount of your attitude change decreases.