

Language of Advertising 01:615:215

Spring 2014

Instructor: Crystal Akers; cakers@scarletmail.rutgers.edu

Office Hours: Please email me to arrange a time to chat or Skype

Prerequisites: None

Course Website: access via sakai.rutgers.edu

Course Meeting Time: Online. The midterm is a closed-book exam and will be held in a classroom (location to be announced). Students will have a choice of time slots to sign up for.

Email reply policy: I will respond to emails within 24 hours during the work week and by the next business day on weekends and holidays.

Course Description

Persuasive messages compete for our attention, our buying power, and even our votes, often by conveying meanings that are not part of the literal message. This course examines advertising strategies from a linguistic perspective, focusing on how sounds, sentence structures, and meanings are used in persuasive messages. Students will learn basic vocabulary and tools for linguistic analysis and apply them to understanding how advertisements can trigger assumptions, deliver unspoken claims, direct the audience's focus, and reflect the social group of the target audience.

Learning Goals

- Become familiar with basic linguistic vocabulary and tools for analyzing advertisements
- Identify linguistic devices used in advertisements and discuss their effects
- Use linguistic devices to create novel advertisements and discuss their likely effects

Required Text

Sedivy, Julie and Greg Carlson. 2011. Sold on Language: How Advertisers Talk to You and What This Says about You. Wiley-Blackwell. ISBN: 978-0-470-68309-5.

Other readings will be posted on the course website

Assessments and Grading Policies

Reading quizzes (30%)

There are 6 reading quizzes, each of which contributes 5% toward the final course grade. Each quiz covers information from the PowerPoint lessons and the assigned chapter and may include multiple choice, matching, and fill-in-the-blank questions.

Each quiz will be available for three days and **may be opened at any time from 12:01 AM Wednesday morning until 11:59 PM Friday night** of the assigned quiz week (see the semester schedule). Once you open a quiz, you will have 20 minutes to complete your work. If you do not complete the quiz within the allotted time, your quiz will close automatically and be submitted for grading.

Your scores on reading quizzes will demonstrate that you have completed the assigned reading and have comprehended the material. Use your quiz scores to identify topics that you might need to review more carefully before the next exam. As a class, scores on reading quizzes will keep me apprised of our overall progress.

Exam (25%)

An exam scheduled just after the middle of the term contributes 25% toward your final grade. The exam may include multiple choice, matching, fill-in-the-blank, and short answer questions.

The exam is a “closed book” exam and will be held in a classroom (location to be announced).

Your score on the midterm will demonstrate your comprehensive knowledge of course material.

Class Participation: Homework and Discussion Portfolio (30%)

There is one very short quiz to complete in the first week of class to show your preparedness for the classwork, but you will primarily demonstrate your class participation by the creation of a portfolio containing your contributions to homework discussion posts. There are three subcategories to your participation grade: completing homework challenges, discussing homework challenges in the discussion forum, and curating a portfolio to showcase your work.

Homework assignments pose multiple different challenges, such as finding an ad that uses a particular linguistic device or manipulating a linguistic device for your own creative purpose. For each homework assignment, you will choose one challenge from those given as choices and post your initial response to a discussion board with other students who have responded to the same challenge. In the discussion forum, you will review and comment upon submissions other students have made. Your objective is to ensure your mastery of the topics covered in the homework, such as by asking questions and by responding to questions and comments about your own work. The semester schedule includes the due dates for the initial submission of each homework, but productive discussion is allowed and expected to continue beyond those dates.

At the end of the semester, you will submit a curated portfolio of your homework and discussion contributions. Your objective with this assignment is to demonstrate that you have participated actively and met the course learning goals. Because you will provide a written, audio or video explanation for each of the items you include in your portfolio, you have the freedom to choose which pieces will demonstrate your participation and learning over the semester. Beyond including selections of your best work, you may wish to choose pieces that show how you improved your understanding over time or how your discussion helped a classmate to better understand a topic.

All discussion and portfolio guidelines are posted on the course website. You will submit your portfolio for an initial review by March 14 to get feedback on whether you are developing your portfolio according to guidelines and meeting/exceeding expectations.

Your contributions to the discussion boards and your portfolio will demonstrate your higher-level engagement with the material, including your ability to identify linguistic devices and assess their effects in advertisements or other persuasive messages.

Final Presentation (15%)

You are required to design an advertisement incorporating linguistic devices covered during the semester and to discuss (in 300-500 words) the likely effects of these devices on your intended audience. You will also review two presentations posted by peers. After receiving the peer evaluations for your own work, you will have the opportunity to revise your work before submitting your final presentation. Your presentation grade will depend on my assessment of the quality of your presentation and the *quality* of the evaluations you write for your peers. All final project guidelines and rubric are posted on the course website.

This project is your opportunity to creatively explore the role of language in persuasive messaging. Your advertisement will demonstrate your ability to manipulate linguistic devices for persuasion. The evaluations you write for your peers will demonstrate your attention to their presentations and your ability to offer constructive feedback.

Academic Integrity Policy

You are expected to be familiar with and abide by [Rutgers University's Academic Integrity Policy](#).

Any collaboration with other students to answer questions in reading quizzes or the exams is a violation of Rutgers' Academic Integrity Policy. Students caught cheating or committing plagiarism will be penalized, as per Rutgers policy.

Attendance and Late Work Policy

Because all work will be completed asynchronously for this course, there is no formal attendance policy; however, regular class engagement will be assessed through the reading quizzes and the homework portfolio. All exams and quizzes are available for multiple days. Please take note of the availability periods on the attached schedule and plan accordingly. Except for documented cases of illness or religious observance, no credit will be awarded for late work.

Accommodations for Special Needs

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

Is an online course right for you?

An online course requires different skill sets for success than a traditionally-delivered course. You must be more responsible for managing your own success in an online course, such as by ensuring you have the time and resources to complete the work, completing the assigned work, and contacting me early for help with challenging material. This course is designed to have the same workload as a traditional, face-to-face class – approximately nine hours of work per week – but instead of simply showing up for lectures, you will demonstrate your work effort primarily through your success on the weekly reading quizzes and the cumulative exam, as well as in your homework portfolio. Finally, this class requires you to interact with your classmates in discussion forums on the course website. It is important that we all be mindful of how our written words can be interpreted by others and that we be respectful and courteous in our interactions.

Students who are most successful in online courses tend to be independent, organized, disciplined, and flexible. Please consider carefully whether your learning style and work traits are conducive to success in an online environment, and contact me if you have any questions or concerns. The University of Missouri offers [this self-assessment](#) for evaluating your potential for success in an online course, as well as these useful [Tips for Academic Success in Online Study](#).

Course evaluations

Anonymous evaluations of this course are welcome at any time via Sakai; the sooner I become aware of a problem, the sooner it can be addressed.

Semester Schedule

- All quizzes are available from 12:01 AM Wednesday morning until 11:59 PM Friday night of the week posted.
- All other assignments are due by 11:59 PM for the days posted.

Week	Topics	Reading	Assignments
1 Semester begins Tues Jan 21	Course introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus • Ch 1 	Course introduction quiz (mandatory and must be retaken until 100% is achieved)
2 Mon Jan 27	What's in a name?: Using sound to make associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 2 • Shrum & Lowrey 2006 • Linguistics PPT: sounds & sound systems 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quiz available 1/29 – 1/31 2. HW 1 submission due 2/7
3 Mon Feb 3			
4 Mon Feb 10	Why form matters: Getting attention and remaining ambiguous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 3 • Linguistics PPT: sentence structure 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quiz available 2/12-2/14
5 Mon Feb 17	What goes without saying: The persuasive power of assumed knowledge and indirect messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 4 • Linguistics PPT: presupposition 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quiz available 2/19-2/21 2. HW 2 submission due 2/28
6 Mon Feb 24			
7 Mon Mar 3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 5 • Preston 1994 (see Sakai) • Linguistics PPT: implicature 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quiz available 3/12-3/14 2. Midterm submission of individual portfolios 3/14
8 Mon Mar 10			
Mon Mar 17	<i>Spring Break</i>		
9 Mon Mar 24			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. HW 3 submission due 3/28
10 Mon Mar 31	Midterm Exam		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exam available Tues April 1 12:01 AM – Fri April 4 11:59 PM
11 Mon Apr 7	You and the people like you: Reflecting social identity in the language of ads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 7 • Linguistics PPT: sociolinguistics 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quiz available 4/9-4/11 2. HW 4 submission due 4/18
12 Mon Apr 14			

Week	Topics	Reading	Assignments
13 Mon Apr 21	Who says?: The communicative agent and bearing the responsibility for ad claims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 6 • Linguistics PPT: speech acts and speaker roles 	1. Quiz available 4/23-4/25
14 Mon Apr 28	Peer Evaluations of Presentations		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Post presentation for peer evaluation by 4/30 2. Two peer evaluations due by 5/2
15 Mon May 5 (regular classes end)	Wrap-Up: Individual Portfolios & Final Presentations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual portfolios due 5/9 • Final presentations due 5/9