

# **SYLLABUS: 01:615:215:90**

## **LANGUAGE OF ADVERTISING**

### **SPRING 2021**

## **Course Overview**

### **Instructor**

Instructor: Prof. Crystal Akers

Email address: [cakers@rutgers.edu](mailto:cakers@rutgers.edu)

Office hours: On Zoom Tuesdays 10 am – 11 am. Also available by appointment.

### **Course Delivery**

This course is fully online. To access the course, please visit [canvas.rutgers.edu](https://canvas.rutgers.edu). For more information about course access or support, contact the [OIT Help Desk](#) at 833-OIT-HELP.

### **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.

### **Prerequisites**

No prerequisites

### **Important Dates**

The course begins on 1/19/2021 and ends on 5/3/2021, and the last day to drop the course without a "W" grade is 1/26/2021.

### **Department Learning Goals**

Students will be able to:

- reason about language scientifically
- demonstrate knowledge of cross-linguistic variability and universal patterns in language
- evaluate a range of views on the nature, origin, and/or structure of language
- identify what someone knows when they know a language.

## Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students should successfully be able to:

- Identify and apply basic linguistic vocabulary and tools for analyzing advertisements
- Identify linguistic strategies used in advertisements and discuss their effects
- Use linguistic strategies to create novel advertisements and discuss their likely effects

## Course Materials

### 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.

- Available online on course reserve through the Rutgers Libraries. See the “Reading List” tab on Canvas.

### Required Videos and/or Website Materials

- Lecture videos and additional resources are provided as "Required Resources" in each module.

### Optional Materials

- Additional resources are provided as “Optional Resources” in each module.

## Assessment

### Assignment Summary

Below are the assignments required for this course and the percentage each assignment contributes to the final course grade. Please refer to the course schedule on Canvas and/or the schedule below for specific due dates.

Assignment	Percentage
Final Project	30
Ad Analysis Assignments	30
Midterm	20
Discussion	10
Reading & Reflection	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

See course schedule for due dates.

## Assignment Overview

### Final Project: 30%

- You will be creating and pitching an ad for a novel product or service. Use your creativity to determine the characteristics of the brand and its target market, give the brand a name, and write ad copy for it. Using whatever format you prefer (text, audio, video), you will pitch your ad to the (imaginary) company behind the brand, sharing with them your knowledge of linguistics and the persuasive effects of language to convince them to pick your ad for their brand.
- You will also review a project created by a peer. After receiving a peer review for your own work, you will have the opportunity to revise your work before submitting your final work. All final project guidelines and rubric will be posted on the course Canvas site.

### Ad Analysis Assignments: 30%

- Three highest scores out of four; 10% each.
- The Ad Analysis assignments ask you to examine how concepts from linguistics are used to construct effective ads. Over the course of the semester, your work will shift from analyzing real ads that you find to constructing and discussing your own ad. You will also be asked to peer review others' work as part of your assignment.
- **Note:** Everyone will start the course with a score of 0 for Ad Analysis 4, and I'll replace it with your earned score on AA4 once we reach that assignment. Until then, Canvas will drop one "0" as it calculates your course grade. This process should, I hope, give you a more accurate picture of your current standing, and it will ensure that your grade in this category will increase after AA4 as long as you earn more than 0 points on it.

### Midterm: 20%

- The midterm will be a series of writing prompts assessing your understanding of concepts from the first half of the semester. The kinds of questions you review in the reading and reflection assignments, along with the work you do on your Ad Analysis assignments, will help you prepare for this assessment.
- The midterm will be un-proctored and open book. You will have 2 hours to complete the midterm once you begin.

### Discussion: 10%

- Five highest scores out of six; 2% each.
- I've found that the more people learn about advertising, the more they become aware of the tactics advertisers use to attract our attention. The discussions are your opportunity to talk freely about the topics we're covering in class and how they appear in the ads you see in your daily life. You will sometimes be assigned to create discussion questions to elicit conversation, and at other times you will be assigned to answer questions that other students have asked. In both cases, at least two posts will be required for full credit.
- Your first post must be submitted by Wednesday, 11:59 p.m., and the second post by 11:59 pm the following Wednesday, at which time the discussion will close for new submissions.
- The lowest discussion grade will be dropped when calculating your final course grade. See the discussion rubric provided on Canvas for more information about grading.
  - **Note:** Everyone will start the course with a score of 0 for Discussion 6, and I'll replace it with your earned score on Disc. 6 once we reach that assignment. See the note under "Ad Analysis" assignments for more info.

### Reading & Reflection: 10%

- Five highest scores out of six; 2% each.
- Think of these questions as more like directed discussion prompts or guided exploratory writing. Each chapter has a set of reading questions to help guide you through important information and analyses. In these reading and reflection assignments, I will ask you questions related to the chapter. To earn full credit on these assignments, you will need to demonstrate a proficient understanding of the chapter.
  - *Tip:* Type up your answers to the reading questions as you complete them; having the answers will help on the reflections and will provide you with notes you can use on your Ad Analyses and Final Project.
  - **Note:** Everyone will start the course with a score of 0 for assignment 6, and I'll replace it with your earned score once we reach that assignment. See the note under "Ad Analysis" assignments for more info.

## Grading Scale

(Source: Rutgers standard undergraduate grade scale)

Grade	Range
A	90 – 100
B+	85 – 89
B	80 – 84
C+	75 – 79
C	70 – 74
D	60 – 69
F	Below 60

## Student Participation Expectations

Because this is an online course, your attendance is based on your online activity and participation. The following is a summary of everyone's expected participation:

- **Logging in: AT LEAST TWICE PER WEEK**  
Be sure you are logging in to the course in Canvas at least two times each week, including weeks with minimal online course activity. (During most weeks you will probably log in many times.) If you have a situation that might cause you to miss an entire week of class, discuss it with me *as soon as possible*.
- **Time Commitment**  
To be successful in this course, you should plan to dedicate approximately 8-10 hours per week.
- **Midterm: REQUIRED, UNPROCTORED**  
The midterm exam is an *unproctored, open-book exam*. You will have 2 hours to complete the exam once you begin it.
- **Office hours and live sessions: OPTIONAL**  
Other than the midterm, any live, scheduled events for the course, including my office hours, are optional. If you are required to discuss an assignment with me, please contact me at the beginning of the week if you need a time outside my scheduled office hours.
- **Participating in discussion forums: 2 OR MORE TIMES PER DISCUSSION**  
As participation, during a week with an assigned discussion you can expect to post at least two times as part of our substantive class discussion on the module's topics.

## Communication Guidelines

The following are my expectations for how we should communicate as a class. Above all, please remember to be respectful and thoughtful.

- **Writing style:** While there is no need to participate in class discussions as if you were writing a research paper, you should remember to write professionally, with appropriate grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Informality (including an occasional emoticon) is fine for non-academic topics. Please also refrain from using all CAPITAL LETTERS, as this is often interpreted as shouting.
- **Citing your sources:** When we have academic discussions, please cite your sources to back up what you say. For the textbook or other course materials, provide at least the title and page numbers or section headings. For online sources, include a link.
- **Tone and civility:** Let's maintain a supportive learning community where everyone feels safe and where people can disagree amicably. Remember that sarcasm doesn't always come across online. Treat your instructor and fellow students with respect at all times, and in all communications.
- **Backing up your work:** Consider composing your academic posts in a word processor, where you can save your work, and then copying into the Canvas discussion.

## Support and Policies

### Late and Missing Work

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 assigned activities and assessments. I reserve the right to make exceptions to the policy here.

- **Missing work:** Canvas is set to automatically record a "0" for any assignment that has no submission once the due date passes.
- **Late work:** You may submit work late, up to the end of the availability period for that assignment. Discussions and the midterm have a limited availability period, but most other assignments can be submitted up to the last official class day of the semester, as identified in the [Rutgers Academic Calendar](#). **Canvas is set to automatically deduct 10% for each day that an assignment is late, rounding up.** The maximum penalty for late work will be 50%.
  - Example 1: An assignment is due at 11:59 pm Sunday. You submit it at 2 am Monday, 2 hours late. Canvas counts this as late 1 date. Canvas will automatically deduct 10% from the maximum grade for the assignment.

- Example 2: An assignment is due at the end of Week 1. You submit it at the end of Week 3. Canvas counts this as 14 days late. Canvas will automatically deduct the maximum late penalty, 50% from the maximum grade for the assignment.
- **Word to the wise:** If you're crunched for time, submit the Ad Analyses either on time or within a day or two of the deadline, even if the work is incomplete. **Use the revision policy plus my feedback to boost your scores along the way.** You can pass this course with a C by earning a B on the final project, three Ad Analyses, the midterm, and completing three discussions or reading & reflection activities as a satisfactory level.

## Extra Credit

You have the opportunity to raise your final grade by up to 2 points through experimental participation.

- Some faculty and graduate students in the Department of Linguistics do experimental research on language. This research depends on the participation of undergraduate participants.
- You have the option of participating in Linguistics experiments during the semester. Each experiment usually takes between 20 and 45 minutes.
- You will get **1 point credit for every half hour** of experimental participation. It does not matter what subfield of Linguistics this experiment is in, but it must be in Linguistics.
- Experiments are offered through the Linguistics Department [experimental management system \(sona\) website](#). Towards the beginning of the semester, your name and email will be added to the experiment system. You will be issued an anonymous id to participate in experiments through this system. Once Linguistics experiments are posted, you can sign up online. Note that this system is different from the psychology pool, and you should not use a psychology ID to log in to the system.
- Any student enrolled in a Linguistics undergraduate course is eligible to participate in Linguistics experiments, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, language status, or impairments, disorders, or disabilities (as long as his/her instructor provides the opportunity). You cannot be denied participation for any of these reasons.
- You have the right to not participate in experiments to earn extra credit. You may speak with me about possible research alternatives, such as reading a pre-approved scholarly article in linguistics and writing a 2-page paper summarizing it.
- If you are taking multiple Linguistics courses that allow for experimental participation to count towards extra credit, you are responsible for making sure you have assigned the credit correctly through the experiment system online. This is not your instructor's, the experimenter's or the experiment system administrator's job!
- If you sign up for, but fail to show up for, two or more experiments, you may be barred from further participation and restricted to research alternatives as described above, so please note the time and location of your experiments and take your schedule and

transportation time into account. Many experiments have restrictions on how late you may cancel online.

## Faculty Feedback and Response Time

I am providing the following list to give you an idea of my intended availability throughout the course. (For more information about course access or support, contact the [OIT Help Desk](#) at 833-OIT-HELP.)

### Grading and Feedback

For reading & reflection assignments, discussions, and Ad Analysis assignments, you can generally expect feedback within **7-10 days**.

### E-mail

I will reply to e-mails within **24 hours** during the work week and by the next business day on weekends and holidays.

Please include the course number or name (Ling 215; LoA) in the subject line.

### Discussions

I will check discussion messages in the discussions **every 24 hours** on weeknights; however, I may not post a response every night. I view discussions as your opportunity to talk amongst yourselves, and I will generally be a lurker.

## Academic Integrity

The consequences of scholastic dishonesty are very serious. Please review the [Rutgers academic integrity policy](#).

Academic integrity means, among other things:

- Develop and write all of your own assignments.
- Show in detail where the materials you use in your papers come from. Create citations whether you are paraphrasing authors or quoting them directly. Be sure always to show source and page number or section heading within the assignment.
- Do not fabricate information or citations in your work.
- Do not facilitate academic dishonesty for another student by allowing your own work to be submitted by others.

If you are in doubt about any issue related to plagiarism or scholastic dishonesty, please discuss it with your instructor.

Other sources of information to which you can refer include:

- [Rutgers' Academic Integrity website](#)



- [Code of Student Conduct](#)
- [Eight Cardinal Rules of Academic Integrity](#)

Please note: collaboration and interaction are expected and often integral aspects of work in this class and outside of it in the highly-connected world we live in today. I encourage you to work together whenever possible and to make the most of the collaborative tools available on our course site and social media – or just get together in person if you're on campus.

Here is some specific guidance on where collaboration is and is not permitted in this course:

- Submit your own work for all assignments.
- Do not discuss the midterm questions with other students during the midterm availability period.
- Cite your sources, including classmates whose thoughts have informed your own opinions.
  - *This point is especially important for discussions. Identifying a classmate who has changed or expanded your thinking in some way not only gives them proper attribution, it helps us build an online learning community that recognizes and values participation.*

Consult the following links for tips on how to improve your note-taking to avoid accidental plagiarism:

- [Don't Plagiarize! Document Your Research](#)
- [Resources for Students \(Rutgers Academic Integrity\)](#)

Students caught cheating or committing plagiarism will be penalized, as per Rutgers policy.

## Grievances and Complaints

The Bylaws of the Department of Linguistics direct that any concern must first be directed to the Course Instructor/Lecturer. (The concern should be shared in a timely manner, and that individual should be given an opportunity to address the concern.)

- If the concern is still not resolved, it will be referred to the Undergraduate Program Director.
- If the concern is still not resolved, it will be referred to the Chair of the Department of Linguistics.
- If the concern is still not resolved, it will be referred to the Dean.

Additional information regarding grievances, disciplinary procedures, and the process for making a complaint can be found in the [Making a Complaint](#) section of the Student Conduct website.

## Accommodations for Accessibility

### Requesting accommodations

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. More information can be found in the [Documentation Guidelines](#) section of the [Office for Disability Services](#) website.

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 [Office for Disability Services](#) website.

Visit the [Student section of the Office of Disability Services](#) website for more information.

## Course Schedule and Deadlines

Week	Topics	Objectives	Instructional Resources	Assignments
1 Semester begins Tues 1/19	Course introduction & <b>What's in a name?:</b> Using sound to make associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze the sound symbolism and lexical neighborhood in a brand name</li> <li>Evaluate how effectively the sound symbolism or lexical neighborhood of a brand name reinforces the brand's key characteristics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Syllabus</li> <li>Ch 1</li> <li>Ch 2</li> <li>Linguistics PPT: sounds &amp; sound systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VT self-introduction</li> </ul>
2 Mon 1/25				<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RR 1</li> <li>Discussion 1</li> </ol>
3 Mon 2/1				<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ad Analysis 1</li> </ol>
4 Mon 2/8	<b>Why form matters:</b> Getting attention and remaining ambiguous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify at least two of the following forms in ads: structural ambiguity, garden path effect, semantic ambiguity, topicalization, main clause, or subordinate clause.</li> <li>Discuss how consumers may be affected by phrasal structure or ambiguity in an ad</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ch 3</li> <li>Linguistics PPT: sentence structure</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RR 2</li> <li>Discussion 2</li> </ol>
5 Mon 2/15				<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ad Analysis 2</li> </ol>
6 Mon 2/22	<b>What goes without saying:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Given a set of common presupposition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ch 4</li> <li>Linguistics PPT:</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RR 3</li> <li>Discussion 3</li> </ol>

Week	Topics	Objectives	Instructional Resources	Assignments
7 Mon 3/1	The persuasive power of assumed knowledge and indirect messages	<p>triggers, identify a presupposition in an ad</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Given a presupposition trigger, write a presupposition to suggest a novel social norm</li> <li>Explain how presuppositions may be used to target specific audiences for ads</li> </ul>	presupposition	3. Ad Analysis 3
8 Mon 3/8	<b>Midterm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain how linguistic “tools” such as sound symbolism, lexical neighborhood, ambiguity, structure, or presupposition may be used by advertisers to persuade consumers</li> </ul>		See Canvas for date and times
Mon 3/15		<i>Spring Break</i>		
9 Mon 3/22	<b>What goes without saying:</b> The persuasive power of implicature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify each of Grice’s Maxims of Conversation</li> <li>Explain why advertisers need to understand the cultural or social background of target consumers to effectively use implicatures in ads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ch 5</li> <li>Preston 1994 (see Canvas)</li> <li>Linguistics PPT: implicature</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RR 4</li> <li>Discussion 4</li> </ol>
10 Mon 3/29	<b>You and the people like you:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write ad copy for a novel product targeted at either</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ch 7</li> <li>Linguistics PPT:</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RR 5</li> <li>Discussion 5</li> </ol>

Week	Topics	Objectives	Instructional Resources	Assignments
11 Mon 4/5	Reflecting social identity in the language of ads	<p>an upscale or downscale market</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain how linguistic tools used in the ad reflect assumptions about the target market</li> </ul>	sociolinguistics	3. Ad Analysis 4
12 Mon. 4/12	<p><b>Who says?:</b></p> <p>The communicative agent and bearing the responsibility for ad claims</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify speech acts</li> <li>Identify the three agent roles for speech acts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ch 6</li> <li>Linguistics PPT: speech acts and speaker roles</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RR 6</li> <li>Discussion 6</li> </ol>
13 Mon. 4/19	Final Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a brand name and ad for a novel product or service</li> <li>Identify at least four different linguistic strategies used in the ad</li> <li>Explain how the linguistic choices in the ad are intended to affect consumers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final Project Guidelines</li> </ul>	1. Final Project Draft
14 Mon 4/26				2. Final Project & any late work due 5/3