

SYLLABUS: 01:615:215:90

LANGUAGE OF ADVERTISING

FALL 2022

Course Overview

Instructor

Instructor: Prof. Crystal Akers

Email: cakers@rutgers.edu. 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.

Student support hours: Drop-in on Zoom Thursdays 10 am – 11 am or schedule an appointment with me at: [Calendly - Crystal Akers](#)

Course Delivery & Technical Support

This course is fully online. There are scheduled due dates for activities and assessments, but the course is asynchronous, which means that you can access the course and participate in it at the times that work best for you, as long as your work is completed by the due dates.

To access the course, please visit canvas.rutgers.edu. For more information about course access or support, contact the [OIT Help Desk](#) at 833-OIT-HELP. Visit the [Rutgers Student Tech Guide](#) page for resources available to all students.

If you do not have the appropriate technology for financial reasons, please email the Dean of Students at deanofstudents@echo.rutgers.edu for assistance. If you are facing other financial hardships, please visit the [Office of Financial Aid](#).

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 Sept. 6, 2022 and ends on Dec. 14, 2022, and the last day to drop the course without a “W” grade is Sept. 15, 2022.

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, you should be able to successfully:

- 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.

- Limited copies are available online through the Rutgers Libraries. See the “Reading List” tab on Canvas.

Additional Instructional resources

- I will post lecture videos and additional required resources in the "Readings & Multimedia" page in each module.
- I also post additional information about topics in the “Optional Resources” page in each module.

Technology Requirements

This course will require that you access online resources in the University's Canvas site. See the [Canvas Student Resources](#) for assistance on getting started in Canvas.

Baseline technical skills necessary for online courses

- Basic computer and web-browsing skills
- Navigating Canvas
- For help, review the Rutgers [Tech Guides](#).

Technology skills necessary for this specific course

- Collaborating on VoiceThread
- Recording, editing, and uploading video

Accessibility Statements

- [Canvas](#)
- [Hypothes.is](#)
- [PlayPosit](#)
- [VoiceThread](#)

Privacy Policies

- [Canvas](#)
- [Hypothesis](#)
- [PlayPosit](#)
- [VoiceThread](#)

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
Ad Analysis Assignments	30
Final Project	25
Midterm	20
Discussion	15
Module Activities	10
Total	100

See course schedule for due dates.

Assignment Overview

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.
 - **Important grading 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 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.

Final Project: 25%

- 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.

Midterm: 20%

- The midterm will be a series of writing prompts assessing your understanding of concepts from the first half of the semester. Answering the reading questions each week, using your responses to delve more deeply into our discussions, and building on the work you do in 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: 15%

- Five highest scores out of six; 3% each.
- I've found that the more people learn about advertising, the more they become aware of the strategies advertisers use to compete for and win 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. For full credit, at least two posts will be required for each discussion, and your posts must demonstrate critical thinking and thoughtful use of the required resources.
- 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.
 - **Important 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.

Module Activities: 10%

- Five highest scores out of six; 2% each.
- The module activities will include small tasks to get you thinking about the module topics and interact with your classmates – hopefully in a fun way! These activities will be graded primarily on completion, and may use tools like VoiceThread, Google Forms, or other apps to generate responses from the class.
 - **Important grading 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

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

Warning Grades

At the mid-point of the semester, instructors are asked to submit Warning Grades for students who have poor performance (W1), poor attendance (W2) or both (W3). When I submit Warning Grades, I look for students whose current grade puts them in danger of not earning a C for the course (W1) or who have not been logging in to Canvas regularly to participate (W2).

If you receive a warning grade, think of it as an invitation for us to talk. (You've probably already receive an email from me, so think of it as another invitation!) I am committed to helping to support you in succeeding in this course, and welcome you to contact me with any concerns, at any time in the semester.

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 several 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.
- **Student support/ Office hours: OPTIONAL**
Any live, scheduled events for the course, including my office hours, are optional, but please drop in! See the Student Support/ Office Hours page on Canvas for more information, and for links to schedule appointments as well.
- **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

Our discussions, activities, and Ad Analysis assignments give us lots of opportunities to interact. I encourage you to bring your authentic self and interests to this course and to your work within it. Please join me in creating a welcoming, inclusive community marked by respectful, thoughtful engagement. Here are some guidelines we will follow:

- **Style:** Class discussions and activities are informal academic activities, and your writing and speech styles typically can match that informality. (After all, we all love an occasional emoji or well-chosen gif.) Remember to be respectful and collegial in your interactions.
- **Citing your sources:** 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.

Support and Policies

Late and Missing Work

All work will be completed asynchronously for this course; 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.**

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**.

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 within the assignment and include a bibliography in the back.
- 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.

Please note: Collaboration and interaction are expected and 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:

- Avoid talking about midterm questions and answers during midterm availability periods.
- Submit your own work for all assignments.
- 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: Identifying and Avoiding Academic Dishonesty](#)

Protecting intellectual property of students and instructors

Almost all original work is the intellectual property of its authors. These works may include syllabi, lecture slides, recorded lectures, homework problems, exams, and other materials, in either printed or electronic form. The authors may hold copyrights in these works, which are protected by U.S. statutes. Copying this work or posting it online without the permission of the author may violate the author's rights. More importantly, these works are the product of the author's efforts; respect for these efforts and for the author's intellectual property rights is an important value that members of the university community take seriously.

For more instructions on copyright protections at Rutgers University, please refer to the [Rutgers Libraries](#).

Accommodations for Accessibility

Requesting accommodations

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.

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

Course Schedule and Deadlines

Week	Topics	Objectives	Resources	Assignments
1 Semester begins Tues 9/6	Course introduction & What's in a name?: Using sound to make associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the sound symbolism and lexical neighborhood in a brand name Evaluate how effectively the sound symbolism or lexical neighborhood of a brand name reinforces the brand's key characteristics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syllabus Ch 1 Ch 2 Linguistics PPT: sounds & sound systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VT self-introduction
2 Mon 9/12				<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Activity 1 Discussion 1
3 Mon 9/19				<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ad Analysis 1
4 Mon 9/26	Why form matters: Getting attention and remaining ambiguous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify at least two of the following forms in ads: structural ambiguity, garden path effect, semantic ambiguity, main clause, or subordinate clause. Discuss how consumers may be affected by phrasal structure or ambiguity in an ad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch 3 Linguistics PPT: sentence structure 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Activity 2 Discussion 2
5 Mon 10/3				<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ad Analysis 2

Week	Topics	Objectives	Resources	Assignments
6 Mon 10/10	What goes without saying: The persuasive power of assumed knowledge and indirect messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given a set of common presupposition triggers, identify a presupposition in an ad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch 4 Linguistics PPT: presupposition 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Activity 3 Discussion 3
7 Mon 10/17		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given a presupposition trigger, write a presupposition to suggest a novel social norm Explain how presuppositions may be used to target specific audiences for ads 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ad Analysis 3
8 Mon 10/24	Midterm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how linguistic “tools” such as sound symbolism, lexical neighborhood, ambiguity, structure, or presupposition may be used by advertisers to persuade consumers 		See Canvas for date and times
9 Mon 10/31	What goes without saying: The persuasive power of implicature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify each of Grice’s Maxims of Conversation Explain why advertisers need to understand the cultural or social background of target consumers to effectively use implicatures in ads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch 5 Preston 1994 (see Canvas) Linguistics PPT: implicature 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Activity 4 Discussion 4
10 Mon 11/7	You and the people like you:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write ad copy for a novel product targeted at either 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch 7 Linguistics PPT: 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Activity 5 Discussion 5

Week	Topics	Objectives	Resources	Assignments
11 Mon 11/14	Reflecting social identity in the language of ads	an upscale or downscale market <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how linguistic tools used in the ad reflect assumptions about the target market 	sociolinguistics	3. Ad Analysis 4
12 Mon 11/21	<i>Thanksgiving Holiday</i>			
13 Mon. 11/28	Who says?: The communicative agent & bearing the responsibility for ad claims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify speech acts Identify the three agent roles for speech acts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch 6 Linguistics PPT: speech acts and speaker roles 	1. Activity 6 2. Discussion 6
14 Mon. 12/5	Final Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a brand name & ad for a novel product or service Identify at least four different linguistic strategies used in the ad Explain how the linguistic choices in the ad are intended to affect consumers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Project Guidelines 	1. Final Project Draft
15 Mon 12/12				2. Final Project & any late work due 12/16