You can fool all the people all of the time if the advertising is right and the budget is big enough.

Joseph E. Levine

Rhetoric is the art ... that deals with the use of discourse ... to persuade ... an audience... Adwriters are some of the most skilled rhetoricians in our society.

Edward P.J. Corbett and Robert J. Connors

Roberto Franzosi

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Lectures Tu–Th 4:00 PM–5:15PM Candler Library 121
Office Hours Tu–Th 12:30–2:30PM or by appointment (please, use email for contacts)


THIS IS A SPECIAL EVIDENCE-FOCUSED SEMINAR. FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE HTTP://EVIDENCE.EMORY.EDU/IN-THE-NEWS/EVIDENCE-FOCUSED-COURSES.HTML

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course aims to provide an introduction to the study of advertising. The course deals with contemporary societies, although it does trace the historical development of advertising and its role in consumer society. The course focuses on how to “read” advertisements (rhetorically, linguistically, semiotically). Students will put into practice what they learn in the course in individual presentations of specific advertisements (case studies) and in a group research project on a comparative analysis of a set of advertisements.

Learning outcomes

By the end of term, students are expected to be able to:

1. Access, locate, identify evidence on a variety of advertising themes both cross-nationally and over time (e.g., male and female sexism in advertising; the representation of race in advertising; forms of rhetorical appeal in advertising in individualistic and collectivistic
2. Evaluate the reliability and validity of the evidence
3. Given the interdisciplinarity involved in the study of advertising (e.g., sociology, linguistics, psychology, semiotics, rhetoric), distinguish uses of evidence across disciplines
4. Interpret the evidence and contextualize it in a body of scholarly work
5. Construct hypotheses and arguments from the evidence collected
6. Ask such questions as:
   a. If I had a magic wand, what kind of evidence would I ideally have to answer my research questions?
   b. What kind of research question(s) does the evidence suggest?
7. Interpret the role of colours, structure, and position of objects in space in an advertisement
8. Identify the relation between text and pictures
9. Identify the difference between open and closed texts
10. Spot intertextual frames
11. Interpret an advertisement in terms of both text and con.text
12. Spot overt and covert meaning in advertising messages
13. Identify and recount the story told in an advertisement
14. Identify the type of story told (e.g., tragedy, comedy)
15. Identify the rhetorical figures used in an advertisement
16. Recognize the possible sexist, racist, nationalist nature of an advertisement
17. Be aware of the historical embedment of advertising (and of the importance of history)
18. Be aware of the cultural embedment of advertising
19. Be aware of the ideological embedment of advertising
20. Find answers to the question: How else could it be?
21. Find answers to the question: Who benefits (cui prodest)??

In addition, students will learn:

1. To work in teams
2. To work with cases
3. To make public presentations before an audience
4. To view things from different perspectives
5. To develop critical thinking
6. To design and carry out a research project aimed to test specific hypotheses
7. To write a research report
8. To be aware of the implications of different rhetorical strategies for writing a text

More generally, you will also learn how to read and write, how to ask questions, how to behave in a classroom, to manage your time. Hadn’t I told you all the things you learn in this course, you would have most likely missed them. In my days, no one told you these things in a syllabus and you spent an entire term learning absolutely nothing. What a waste of time universities used to be! Aren’t you lucky you are at Emory in 2018? 😊

Welcome to the world of Max Weber’s bureaucratic rationalization. And, yes, by all means, add to the list: “students will learn the use of irony” (one of the fundamental tropes of rhetoric, something you will also learn in the course).
COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Requirements

The course requires students:
1) to attend and participate in the class;
2) to make two group presentations to the class;
3) to take a first in-class, open-book exam;
4) to take a second in-class, open-book exam;
5) to carry out a group staged research project, present it in class, and write a project report.

Deadlines and important dates

Term break: March 12-16
Last day of classes: April 30
Presentations: Every Thursday
First exam: February 20 First in-class, open-book exam
Second exam: April 10 Second in-class, open-book exam
Group projects presentations:
1. Week 5, First group project presentation (10 mins each)
2. Week 15: Final group project presentations (20 mins each)
3. May 5, Final research report due by email (10-15 double spaced pages max)

Grading

Grading will be based on the following items:
1) first exam (30%). Students are expected to take an open-book, in-class exam made up of short and long-answer questions and based on the readings, lectures, and in-class discussions up to the exam date. Grading will reflect students' engagement with issues of evidence.
2) Second exam (30%). Students are expected to take a second open-book, in-class exam made up of short and long-answer questions and based on the readings, lectures, and in-class discussions up to the exam date and from the date of the first exam. Grading will reflect students' engagement with issues of evidence.
3) participation (10%). Students are expected to attend classes regularly (attendance is enforced through a sign-up sheet) and contribute to class discussion. Pop quizzes will be given to ensure that students do the reading so as to be able to participate meaningfully to class discussions.
4) presentations (10%). Each student is expected to make a 15-minute PowerPoint presentation in class of advertisements or commercials of their choice. Issues of evidence must be highlighted and discussed.
5) group project (20%). Students are expected to work in groups (consisting of 3 students) on a staged project based on the comparative analysis of a set of advertisements. The group project is a staged assignment in two stages, each stage carrying a grade. Issues of evidence must be clearly highlighted and discussed.
For the group project, each group will need to submit a statement where they outline the contributions made by each member of the group (e.g., Paula: attended 1 meeting out of 4; read and summarized 3 journal articles; Kevin: attended 4 meetings out of 4; coded the data collected; Tracy: attended 4 meetings out of 4; wrote the first draft) and the percentage of effort expended by each in relation to other members (e.g., Paula 90%, Kevin 100%, Tracy, 100%). Individual grades for the group project will reflect individual effort.

Students who are not satisfied with a grade received are welcome to ask for re-grading for well-motivated reasons. The result of re-grading may be a higher grade, the same grade, or a lower grade.

**Staged group research project**

Students are expected to work in groups (consisting of 3 students) on a project based on the comparative analysis of a set of advertisements. Groups will make in-class presentations of their projects at the end of term and submit a final research report (10-15 double spaced pages). The research report should be of the type described in the journal articles that you will have read through the course. These articles typically take a comparative approach (e.g., across countries, over time, across magazines). Comparison will give you the best way to find different patterns in your data. For instance, you could study how male bodies (perhaps from different races) are represented in men’s and women’s magazines (or in magazines that target men and women of different age, social status, or race). Conversely, you could study the representation of female bodies. You could look at whether certain types of advertisements may prefer a comic employment (e.g., condoms). You could look at how different car manufacturers, which target different consumer markets, advertise their products. You could look at whether rhetorical strategies have changed overtime (comic or tragic story employment) in a set of adverts. Once you have zoomed in on a topic, you will need to draw a sample of adverts that you will then analyze using content analysis as a technique for collecting your data. For this, you will need to design a coding scheme, based on a set of different coding categories that allow you to extract information from your adverts and, perhaps, to test specific hypotheses that you have in mind. You can put these coding categories in an Excel spreadsheet and apply this scheme consistently to each advert in your sample (putting each advert in a new column). Once you have completed data collection, you can analyze the data with simple graphical tools (pie charts or bar charts, percentages). You will report your findings in a final research report. This report should have the basic structure of any of the journal articles assigned in the course, namely a statement of the problem (why you have chosen a specific issue to study), literature review (i.e., whether and how the problems has been studied already in the literature), data and method (here you report your coding scheme design and coding categories; each of the articles you read will give you an example of coding scheme); empirical results (where you report your findings), and conclusions. In discussing your findings and drawing your conclusions, please, make sure you use the concepts and tools learned from the readings.

The group project is a **staged assignment** in two stages with different requirements and different deadlines for each stage. At each stage, students are expected to make PowerPoint presentations of the work carried out to that point.

1. The first presentation illustrates briefly what the group will work on (e.g., race or gender portrayal in advertising), what basic literature is available (a good research tool for this purpose is Google Scholar), and what evidence they will use (i.e., which advertisements they will use and what problems they expect)
3. The second and final presentation illustrates the overall project and its findings.

**Hints at data sources**

1. For a list of websites of advertisements, History Matters,  
   http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/ads/online.html
2. The ANA Educational Foundation (AEF) www.aef.com with a collection of advertisements
3. Advertisements of the World™ advertisements of the World™:  
   https://adsoftheworld.com/
4. Archive of advertisements, American Marketing Association  
   https://archive.ama.org/archive/Community/ARC/Pages/Additional/History/AdArchives.aspx
   https://repository.duke.edu/dc/adaccess; https://repository.duke.edu/dc/eaa
7. Coloribus archive https://www.coloribus.com/
   http://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/subjects/advertising
10. Creativity http://creativity-online.com/
11. Adverlicious http://adverlicio.us/

**Presentations**

Since this is an evidence-based seminar, in both individual and group presentations, you will need to address explicitly issues of evidence. The first and fundamental question is: What is the evidence for the claims you are making? Does the evidence come from data you collected or from the scholarly literature?

1. If you collected your own data, how did you collect it? What research design did you adopt (and what does this mean)? How valid and reliable is the evidence you collected? And what does it mean to talk about validity and reliability of evidence? But perhaps before asking all these questions, you should ask yourself: **why should we care about evidence?**
2. If the evidence for your claims comes from a review of published work on a topic (e.g., gender in advertisement, race in advertisement), do the above questions about evidence still apply? How can you weigh the value of any given study? Are some studies “better” than others? How can you answer that question?

So, whether you are presenting your own project or a specific scholarly study (or a set of them), whether you are dealing with gender advertisement or children advertisement, advertising in countries characterized by an individualistic culture (e.g., the US) or a more collectivistic culture (e.g., South Korea or China) you will need to address these questions.

**Exams**
February 20  First open-book, in-class exam (30% of final grade)
April 10    Second open-book, in-class exam (30% of final grade)

Honor code

The Emory University honor code applies fully to this course. When you sign an exam or submit your assignments, you are pledging to the honor code. For reference, please consult the Emory website.

For the group project, each group will need to submit a statement where they outline the contributions made by each member of the group (e.g., Paula: attended 1 meeting out of 4; read and summarized 3 journal articles; Kevin: attended 4 meetings out of 4; coded the data collected; Tracy: attended 4 meetings out of 4; wrote the first draft; Alexandra: never attended meetings; edited the final draft) and the percentage of effort expended by each in relation to other members (e.g., Paula 90%, Kevin 100%, Tracy, 100%, Alexandra 20%). Individual grades for the group project will reflect individual effort.

Readings

Readings for the course come from books and journal articles or book chapters. All reading material has been placed on reserve.

Readings have been separated in the syllabus into Required Readings and Suggested Readings. Suggested readings are only meant to provide a minimal bibliography. For the purpose of your grade, you are not expected to read them (unless, of course, you are a glutton for punishment! Although … it is also true that the more you read, the more you know… and the better you would do in your presentations and written work).

Required books


Highly recommended books (out of print but available on the web as used books and placed on reserve at the Emory Library)


Documentaries


*Dove-Evolution* [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFPGa0pKyTg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFPGa0pKyTg) (3 mins.)
Considering a career in advertising? You may then consider taking advertising courses at SCAD Atlanta

For those of you who want to pursue a career in advertising, you may want to consider taking courses at SCAD Atlanta (Savannah College of Art and Design, Atlanta campus). SCAD is one of the leading art institutes in the country. SCAD’s program in advertising (http://www.scad.edu/advertising/) offers a range of courses in creative copywriting, strategic planning, business and integrated brand marketing.

Students at Emory can take courses at SCAD (e.g., in advertising) at no extra expense (as part of their tuition) and with full recognition of the credits taken at SCAD. SCAD and Emory are members of the ARCHE program, a cross-registration program sponsored by the Atlanta Regional Council for Higher Education. You can find more information about ARCHE at http://registrar.emory.edu/students/arche.html For a list of all participating schools through ARCHE:

Interested students should get in touch with the Registrar office at Emory. They have the appropriate forms and will work directly with the registrar at SCAD, Atlanta.
COURSE OUTLINE

1. Getting started: How to read advertisements (Week 1)
2. A first look at gender and race in advertising (Weeks 2-3)
   a. Gender portrayals in advertising (Week 2)
   b. The representation of race (Week 3)
3. Telling a story and telling it well (Weeks 4-6)
   a. Telling a story: Advertising and narrative (Week 4)
   b. Telling it well: The rhetoric of advertising (Week 5)
   c. Sexing it up: Sources of rhetorical appeal (Week 6)
4. The land (and system) of plenty: Advertising in historical perspective (Week 7)
5. Food advertising (and health) (Week 8)
6. Advertising: Selling more than just commodities? (Weeks 9-11)
   a. Spring break!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
   b. Back to gender (Week 10)
   c. Back to race (Week 11)
7. Advertising in cross-cultural perspective (Week 12)
8. Getting them young: Children and advertising (Week 13)
9. Political advertising (Week 14)
10. Group project presentations (Week 15)
Week 1 (Jan 16-18)

1. Getting started: How to read advertisements

*Required readings:*


*Suggested readings:*


Weeks 2-3

3. A first look at gender and race in advertising

What does the scholarly evidence suggest about gender representations in advertising? How strong is the evidence? Are things getting “better” (and what does this mean)? What is your gut feeling? Do you think the representation of women in US advertising is fairer than in Mexico or Italy? What does the evidence say?

Week 2 (Jan 23-25)

3.a. Gender portrayals in advertising

*Required readings:*


*Suggested readings:*


**Documentaries**


Available on Youtube:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sypMan9cWyo&feature=PlayList&p=AFABCDC996E90362&playnext=1&playnext_from=PL&index=2 (Part 1, 10 mins.)


http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BbFvCXd667U (Part 4, 4:14 mins.)

*Dove-Evolution* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFPGa0pKyTg (3 mins.)

**Week 3 (Jan 30-Feb 1)**

**3.b. The representation of race**

What does the scholarly evidence suggest about the representation of race in advertising? Do the different races fair equally well (or equally poorly) in advertising? How strong is the evidence? “Things have gotten better!” Or... Could representations be more subtly stereotypical? What evidence can you harness to back your claims?

**Required readings:**


Suggested readings:


Weeks 4-6
4. Telling a story and telling it well

Pay attention to the story advertisements tell. Do they pull at your heart strings? Do they just give you factual information about the product? What evidence can you harness to back your claims?

Week 4 (Feb 6-8)
4.a. Telling a story: Advertising and narrative

*Required readings:*


*Suggested readings:*


Week 5 (Feb 13-15)
4.b. Telling it well: The rhetoric of advertising

Required readings:


Suggested readings:


February 20 First in-class, open-book exam

Week 6 (Feb 20-22)
4.c. Sexing it up: Sources of rhetorical appeal

Required readings:


**Suggested readings:**


\section*{Week 7 (Feb 27-Mar 1)}

5. The land (and system) of plenty: Advertising in historical perspective

**Required readings:**


**Suggested readings:**


Week 8 (Mar 6-8)
6. Food advertising (and health)

What do we know about food advertising? Do they give you the “facts” about nutrition? What evidence do we have about food advertising and its effects on people’s health? If food advertising is distorting, what do you think one should do? Hold food corporations responsible? Hold consumers responsible?

Required readings:


Suggested readings:


Weeks 9-11
7. Advertising: Selling more than just commodities?

Week 9 (Mar 13-15) SPRING BREAK!!!!

Week 10 (Mar 20-22)
7.a. Back to gender

Required readings:


Suggested readings:


Week 11 (Mar 27-29)
7.b. Back to race

Required readings:


Suggested readings:


Week 12 (Apr 3-5)

8. Advertising in Cross-cultural Perspective

Do commercials differ in different countries or, better, in different cultures (e.g., individualistic versus collectivistic cultures)? Do advertisers use different forms of appeal? What evidence do we have?

Required readings:


Suggested readings:


April 10 Second in-class, open-book exam

Week 13 (Apr 10-12)

9. Getting them young: Children and advertising

What does the scholarly evidence suggest about children advertising? Reflecting upon your own exposure to advertising as a child and adolescent, can you see how advertising has affected your gender, racial, class, nation-state identity? What is your evidence?

Required readings:


**Suggested readings:**


**Week 14 (Apr 17-19)**

**10. Political advertising**

Are there predictable patterns in political advertising? What would you do differently if you were to write a political advertising campaign? Using what evidence would you write your specific campaign?

**Required readings:**


**Suggested readings:**


**Week 15 (Apr 24-26)**

**Group project presentations**