

CMN 211

Language and Power

1. Course Description

Powerful texts such as influential news stories, government policies and legal decisions help shape our lives. Using concepts from critical discourse analysis, this course introduces students to the basic analytical vocabulary and tools to understand ways that powerful texts work. Students will learn to identify the linguistic techniques that characterize the important documents that affect our social worlds. They will have opportunities to respond to these texts. **Lecture: 3 hours.**

Note: This course is available only to Professional Communication and Creative Industries

2. Course Objectives & Learning Outcomes

- To understand the way communication functions in the construction and maintenance of power relations
- To acquire a working knowledge of functional grammar
- To demonstrate an ability to conduct a critical discourse analysis

3. Topics Covered

3.1 Critical discourse analysis

- 3.1.1 Discourse and social practice
- 3.1.2 Hegemony, ideology and resistance
- 3.1.3 Register and genre

3.2 Functional grammar

- 3.2.1 Nominalization, passive and active voice
- 3.2.2 Humor and irony
- 3.2.3 Metaphor and euphemism

3.3 Forms of discourse

- 3.3.1 Institutional
- 3.3.2 Legal
- 3.3.3 Advertising
- 3.3.4 Political

4. Teaching Method

4.1. Workshops and Lectures

Teaching will be conducted by interactive lectures, case studies, and in-class and online activities.

4.2. Graded Assignments

Evaluation will include a short written essay, midterm test, group project(which may include an oral component), and a final exam.

5. Course Materials

5.1. Textbooks

Simpson, P. & Mayr, A. (2010). *Language and Power: A Resource Book for Students*. New York: Routledge. Text is available electronically (Kindle, iPad, Kobo, etc.) or hard copy (Ryerson University Bookstore).

6. Course Policies

6.1. University Policies

Students are required to adhere to all applicable university policies found in their Online course shell in D2L and the [Course Outline Policies](#).

6.2. Print and Digital Copying Guidelines:

Ryerson University complies with [Canada's Copyright Act](#) which protects both creators/owners and users of copyrighted materials. Students should familiarize themselves with [Ryerson's Copyright policies and procedures](#), and contact the Copyright and Scholarly Engagement Librarian at copyrt@ryerson.ca for questions, concerns and clarification of the copyright rules.

6.3. Turnitin.com

Turnitin.com is a plagiarism prevention and detection service to which Ryerson subscribes. It is a tool that helps instructors determine the similarity between student work and the work of other students who have submitted papers to the site (at any university), Internet sources, and a wide range of books, journals and other publications. While it does not contain all possible sources, it gives instructors some assurance that students' work is their own. No decisions are made by the service; it generates an "originality report," which instructors must evaluate to judge whether something is plagiarized.

Students agree by taking this course that their written work will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of comparing the similarity of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms-of-use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com website. **Students who do not want their work submitted to this plagiarism detection service must, by the end of the second week of class, consult with their instructor to make alternative arrangements.** Even when an instructor has not indicated that a plagiarism detection service will

be used, or when a student has opted out of the plagiarism detection service, if the instructor has reason to suspect that an individual piece of work has been plagiarized, the instructor is permitted to submit that work in a non-identifying way to any plagiarism detection service.

6.4. Email Communication

Ryerson requires that any official or formal email communication from students be sent from their official Ryerson electronic accounts.

6.5. Video and Audio Recording

No video or audio recording is permitted in class without the express permission of the instructor.

7. Ryerson's Learning Management System

Ryerson University supports Brightspace by D2L as its official Learning Management System. University Policies governing Brightspace have been documented at the [Courses @ Ryerson Privacy and Security website](#).