

Syllabus of the course "Semiotics in Russian and American advertising"

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Course description

The course introduces students to the theoretical and practical aspects of semiotics in Russian and American advertising. It approaches advertising as a special verbal and non-verbal communication and a complex semiotic system. The course will motivate students to: (i) analyse advertising as a continuous reflection of global political, social, economic and other current changes; and to (ii) approach to Russian advertising an aspect of a new mass culture. It touches upon a number of aspects: the impact of American culture on Russian advertising, the cultural peculiarities of modern Russian and American advertising; intercultural communication in advertising as a result of explicit and implicit factors of globalization.

The main aims of the course are to: (i) demonstrate the impact of global processes on our life through contemporary advertising; (ii) to introduce new approaches to culture and language into the study of the contemporary Russian advertising culture; (iii) to make students appreciate the importance of intercultural communication and globalization for the study of contemporary cultural, social and linguistic situation. We will demonstrate the interdependence between culture and language of advertising in the contemporary language situation through analysis of linguistic and cultural phenomena and show the impact of the American advertising on the culture and language of the Russian advertising. It is important not only to observe the diversity of similar linguistic devices in Russian and American advertising discourse but also, to

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create an interdisciplinary model of comparative analysis and to prove the need of semiotic analysis for the study of comparable advertising models. The key categories, semiotic analysis, intercultural communication, globalization, will be examined along with text analysis, as well as use of linguistic and paralinguistic means.

Students will be asked to reach conclusions about what culture of Russian advertising in a globalised world means and what are the consequences of Russia's exposure to American culture. In the course of doing so, the students will have to become aware of the different linguistic and paralinguistic means as well as applications of semiotic analysis and appropriate use of them.

Course Goals

- to understand of the general principles of semiotics, including terminology, concepts
- to apply the tools of semiotics for the analysis of concrete texts, both visual and written
- to write analyses of ads
- to appreciate advertising as a source for modern creativity
- to analyse the use of language means employed in advertising
- to understanding the semiotic and linguistic means of manipulation on all levels of language, from fine literature to everyday conversation

Required texts

Daniel Chandler, *Semiotics: The Basics*, London: Routledge, 2001.

Marcel Danesi. *Messages, Signs, and Meanings: A Basic Textbook in Semiotics and Communication Theory*, 3rd Edition. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc., 2004.

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Sean Hall. *This Means This, This Means That: A User's Guide to Semiotics*. London: Laurence King Publishing, 2007. – 176 p.

Gillian Dyer. *Advertising as Communication (Studies in Communication)*. London ; New York: Routledge, 1988. – 230 p.

Jackson Lears. *Fables Of Abundance: A Cultural History Of Advertising In America*. [New York]: Basic Books, 1994. – 492 p.

Gilles Fauconnier, Mark Turner. *The way we think: conceptual blending and the mind's hidden complexities*. Basic Books, 2003. – 440 p.

Stuart Ewen. *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976. – 261 p.

William Leiss, Stephen Kline, Sut Jhally. *Social Communication in Advertising: Persons, Products and Images of Well-Being - 2nd Edition*. New York: Routledge, 1990. – 426 p.

Robert Phillipson *Linguistic Imperialism*. 1992. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 365 p.

Joel Sherzer. *Speech play and verbal art*. Austin : University of Texas Press, 2002. – 186 p.

Angela Goddard. *The Language of Advertising: Written Texts (Intertext)*. London; New York : Routledge, 1998. – 134 p.

Guy Cook. *The Discourse of Advertising (Interface (London, England))*. New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2001. 280 p.

Judith Williamson (2002) *Decoding Advertisements (Ideology and Meaning in Advertising)* London, New-York: Marion Boyars. 186 p.

Arthur Asa Berger. *Ads, fads, and consumer culture : advertising's impact on American character and society; with illustrations by the author*. 3rd ed. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007. – 217 p.

David Crystal. *Language play*. University Of Chicago 1998.

Internet resources of print ads, radio, television and internet video ads:

Russian ads	American ads
http://www.advertology.ru/ http://www.youtube.com	http://www.advertisementave.com http://adsoftheworld.com/ http://www.youtube.com http://www.adreview.com/ http://www.visit4info.com/ http://www.adflip.com/ http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/adaccess/ http://sudesirek.tripod.com/main.html http://www.absolutad.org/

***some of them require registration**

Course prerequisites

The course is geared for graduate students in humanities who have had courses in theory of Linguistics, Cultural and Social and Media Studies. It can also be used for upper-level undergraduate students in Linguistics and Media Studies. English is required.

Course requirements

Attendance of all classes is required because of their interactive character. You can be absent for no more than three class periods.

Participation in class is required. Your active participation in all class discussions reflects your understanding of the problems discussed.

Written assignments – Annotations of Russian and American advertisements (4*10=40%): during the classes you will be asked to find, analyze and compare Russian and

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American advertising texts with different linguistic, para- and extralinguistic means which will demonstrate each cultural identity or some cultural similarity and your ability to apply semiotic analysis to the given ads.

Final test on theoretical approaches (20%): by the end of the classes you will be asked to do a final multiple choice test.

Final paper (20%): by the end of the classes you will be asked to write 5-6 pages essay in order to summarize the key points of the course, analyze each cultural identity or find some cultural similarity in Russian and American advertising which is supposed to be the impact of American advertising. The paper is expected to be submitted one week before the end of the course.

Final presentation (20%): You will have to prepare a short presentation, including the contrastive linguistic and cultural analysis of some Russian and American advertising texts and defend it in the classroom at the last class.

COURSE CONTENT

SET 1. CONCEPTUAL BLENDING IN ADVERTISING

Week 1: Business & Organizational Matters: (classroom issues, course goals, course requirements, course web site (messenger program), textbooks and sources for Russian and American ads, etc.). Semiotics. Preliminary Remarks. Main Concepts of Semiotics: Signs, icons, symbols. Some Aspects of Semiotic Analysis, applying to advertising.

Reading:

Daniel Chandler, *Semiotics: The Basics*, London: Routledge, 2001.

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Marcel Danesi. Messages, Signs, and Meanings: A Basic Textbook in Semiotics and Communication Theory, 3rd Edition. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc., 2004.

Sean Hall. This Means This, This Means That: A User's Guide to Semiotics. London: Laurence King Publishing, 2007. – 176 p.

Week 2. Advertising as Communication, Art and Culture. Historical and Cultural Glimpses on the Russian and American Advertising. Some Cultural Peculiarities of Russian and American Advertising.

Reading:

Gillian Dyer. Advertising as Communication (Studies in Communication). London; New York: Routledge, 1988. – 230 p.

Jackson Lears. Fables Of Abundance: A Cultural History Of Advertising In America. [New York]: Basic Books, 1994. – 492 p.

Gilles Fauconnier, Mark Turner. The way we think: conceptual blending and the mind's hidden complexities. Basic Books, 2003. – 440 p.

Stuart Ewen. Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976. – 261 p.

Arthur Asa Berger. Ads, fads, and consumer culture : advertising's impact on American character and society; with illustrations by the author. 3rd ed. Lanham : Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007. – 217 p.

Week 3-4. Advertising Culture as a System of Signs. Decoding Russian and American Advertisements. Russian and American Advertising Cultures.

Reading:

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Ron Beasley, Marcel Danesi. [Persuasive Signs: The Semiotics of Advertising \(Approaches to Applied Semiotics, 4\)](#). Berlin ; New York : Mouton de Gruyter, 2002. – 193 p.

Judith Williamson (2002) *Decoding Advertisements (Ideology and Meaning in Advertising)*
London, New-York: Marion Boyars. 186 p.

**SET 2. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF RUSSIAN AND AMERICAN
ADVERTISING DISCOURSE**

Week 5-6: Discourse and Language of Russian and American Advertising.

Reading:

Angela Goddard. *The Language of Advertising: Written Texts (Intertext)*. London ; New York :
Routledge, 1998. – 134 p.

Guy Cook. *The Discourse of Advertising (Interface (London, England)*. New York, N.Y.:
Routledge, 2001. 280 p.

Week 7-8. Language Game as the Main Source of Creativity and Productivity in
Advertising. Speech Play in Advertising.

Reading:

Nilsen, Don L. F.; and Alleen Pace Nilsen. *Language play: An introduction to linguistics*.
Rowley: Newbury House.

Gilles Fauconnier, Mark Turner. *The way we think: conceptual blending and the mind's hidden
complexities*. Basic Books, 2003. – 440 p.

Joel Sherzer. *Speech play and verbal art*. 1st ed. Austin : University of Texas Press, 2002. – 186
p.

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Week 9. Intertextuality: Definitions and Ways of Applying it in the Ads. (Analysis of Analogous Examples of the Russian and American Ads).

Reading:

Daniel Chandler, *Semiotics: The Basics*, London: Routledge, 2001.

Judith Williamson (2002) *Decoding Advertisements (Ideology and Meaning in Advertising)*
London, New-York: Marion Boyars. 186 p.

Internet resources with ad parodies:

<http://parody.organique.com/>

<http://adbusters.org/spoofads/index.html>

<http://www.sharrow.com/parody.html>

<http://ntpaul.sprog.auc.dk/subvertizing.htm>

SET 3. GLOBAL ADVERTISING DISCOURSE

Week 10. Contemporary Language and Culture Situation in Russian Advertising. The Impact of American Advertising on Russian Advertising in the Frame of Cultural Globalization.

Reading:

Robert Phillipson *Linguistic Imperialism*. 1992. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 365 p.

Gilles Fauconnier, Mark Turner. *The way we think: conceptual blending and the mind's hidden complexities*. Basic Books, 2003. – 440 p.

Judith Williamson (2002) *Decoding Advertisements (Ideology and Meaning in Advertising)*
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Week 11-12. Comparative Analysis of Para- and Extralinguistic Means in Russian and American Advertising. The Necessity of a New Linguistic Expertise of Advertising As a Mass Culture Phenomenon (on the basis of speech play).

Reading:

Judith Williamson (2002) *Decoding Advertisements (Ideology and Meaning in Advertising)*
London, New-York: Marion Boyars. 186 p.

William Leiss, Stephen Kline, Sut Jhally. *Social Communication in Advertising: Persons, Products and Images of Well-Being - 2nd Edition.* New York: Routledge, 1990. – 426 p.

Week 13. Final Test (Multiple choice, Questions)

Week 14-15. Final Paper Presentations.
