



ÖREBRO APPLY TRAINING SCHOOL: MULTIMODAL RHETORIC AND ARGUMENTATION IN PUBLIC POLICY COMMUNICATION

Örebro University, HumUS

April 5-7, 2022

Abstracts of the planned lectures and workshops (detailed programme will be communicated to the participants in due time)

Gabrijela Kišiček (University of Zagreb), Prosodic features in multimodal argumentative discourse

Recent research in the realm of argumentation theory has introduced the concept of auditory arguments, which Groarke (2018) defines as “an attempt to provide rational evidence for a conclusion using non-verbal sounds instead of or (more frequently) in addition to words”. It means that sounds, both human and non-human, may serve as part of a logos and contribute to (re)constructing the argument. The lecture and workshop will deal with auditory components of multimodal argumentative discourse i.e., prosodic features of a spoken language (voice quality, tempo, rhythm, intonation, loudness etc.) as well as other sounds which may be employed. The lecture will emphasize the importance of sound on several examples of public discourse (such as media and public policy) and suggest tools for analysis and evaluation of auditory arguments. During the workshop, participants will learn how to detect, identify and evaluate argumentatively relevant sounds in multimodal discourse.

Jens Kjeldsen (University of Bergen), Rhetorical reception analysis of multimodal communication and argumentation

The lecture will provide a theoretical and methodological introduction to rhetorical reception analysis and present examples of this method in multimodal communication. In the workshop, we will examine the rhetoric of selected national health authorities during the COVID-19 crisis. We will examine multimodal material (e.g. campaign videos) from the COVID-campaigns to study the rhetoric that the various health authorities employed to address their citizens. Following the method of rhetorical reception analysis (Kjeldsen 2018; Kjeldsen and Hess 2021; Kjeldsen 2015; Kjeldsen and Andersen 2018), we will do both a textual analysis of the videos and a brief exercise on reception using research interviews and rhetorical protocol analysis. During the workshop, participants will carry out these exercises in groups; each group will then present their results, and we will end with a discussion on how rhetorical reception analysis may contribute to the study of multimodal rhetoric and argumentation.



Dimitris Serafis (University of Liverpool / Università della svizzera italiana), Critical perspective to the argumentative analysis of multimodal communication in times of 'crises'

During the lecture, participants will discuss the main aims and principles of (Multimodal) Critical Discourse Studies: a set of scholarly approaches that aim to unveil the ways opaque ideological beliefs permeate public (multimodal) texts, ending up (re)producing power inequalities. Through this prism, we will employ tools from Social Semiotics approaches to analyse newspapers' front pages, applying the Argumentum Model of Topics-led analysis of inference in (multimodal) argumentation. Our focus will be on highly polarized social contexts such as the ones of the so-called 'refugee crisis' and the 'Brexit'. All in all, we will see how powerful institutions such as mainstream media construe social events as 'crises' to facilitate their position and favour the status quo. During the workshop, participants will analyse – in groups – newspapers' front pages that represent specific 'crises'. To that end participants are expected to send in advance an example of a front page from the European mainstream press that they would like to discuss and analyse. More instructions will be provided in due course.

Hartmut Stöckl (University of Salzburg), Multimodal argumentation in (pro-social) advertising

While policy makers develop the arguments, it is ultimately the writers and communication designers in professional advertising agencies who construct an argumentation fit to go public. This is as true of commercial companies or brands as it is of government departments or NGOs. The lecture will introduce advertising as a special persuasive genre, which has come a long way from explicit verbal argumentation in the 17th ct. to the minimal text-image messages of today. As these modes of communication combine in ever more ingenious ways, rhetorical techniques are required that sustain a multimodal argument. The lecture will explain and illustrate the special type of inexplicit and subtle verbo-visual argumentation we find in (pro-social) advertisements. The examples show that multimodal rhetorical figures – in particular metaphors, metonymies and puns – are important catalysts to effectively bring out the arguments.

Assimakis Tseronis (Örebro University), Analysis and evaluation of multimodal argumentation

In this lecture, participants will be introduced to the analysis of multimodal argumentation within the pragma-dialectical framework and will discuss questions regarding the evaluation of multimodal arguments. Pragma-dialectics takes a procedural, pragmatic and functional approach to the study of argumentative discourse which provides relevant concepts and tools for the argumentative analysis of multimodal communication. In the analysis of multimodal argumentation, attention is paid not only to the identification of the relevant argumentative moves but also to the consideration of the effectiveness of the choices made in designing them. When it comes to the evaluation of multimodal argumentation, the strengths and weaknesses of the recourse to argument schemes and the accompanying critical questions will be discussed. Examples from front covers of news magazines and subvertisements will be used to illustrate the issues discussed during the lecture. At the workshop, participants will have the opportunity to apply the categories and tools presented earlier to the analysis of samples from official EU webpages and social media regarding actions in the fields of education, technology and sustainability.