

## COM4706 Language & Power

Fall 2018

Section: 36G8/1E54

### Syllabus

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**Instructor:** Dr. Emily Rine Butler  
**Meeting Time:** MWF 5 (11:45-12:35)  
**Classroom:** Rolfs 207  
**Office:** Rolfs 412  
**Office Hours:** T 12-1pm; W 1-2pm  
**Office Phone:** 352-273-2743  
**E-mail:** [erbutler@ufl.edu](mailto:erbutler@ufl.edu) (email preferred)  
**Website:** <http://lss.at.ufl.edu> (follow log-on for e-learning in CANVAS)

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#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course explores the role of language in articulating, maintaining, and subverting power relations in society. Drawing from Communication Studies and Applied Linguistics, the course provides students with the tools to uncover, describe, and critically analyze the various (strategic) biases in language that create and reinforce power asymmetries in society.

The objective of this course is to explore the role of language in articulating, maintaining, and subverting power relations in society. We will consider the interplay between linguistics and extra-linguistic factors such as race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation, as well as what linguistic factors index power relationships in specific types of discourse, such as media discourse, political discourse, and institutional discourse. Additionally, this course aims to provide students with the meta-language and analytical tools to describe, analyze, and uncover the various (strategic) biases in language, as well as articulate how these biases reflect, maintain, and create power relationships among individual speakers and in society.

#### **COURSE PREREQUISITES:**

COM1000 or SPC2300 for Comm. Studies Minor students, or with permission by the instructor; none for Linguistics students, although LIN 3010 and/or LIN 4600 are recommended; (Note: Students do not need to be doing Comm. Studies or Linguistics to take this course)

#### **GENERAL EDUCATION OBJECTIVES AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

This course is a [Social and Behavioral Sciences \(S\)](#) subject area course and a [\(D\) Diversity](#) course in the UF General Education Program.

Social and behavioral science courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and underlying theory or methodologies used in the social and behavioral sciences. Students will learn to identify, describe and explain social institutions, structures or processes. These courses emphasize the effective application of accepted problem-solving techniques. Students will apply formal and informal qualitative or quantitative analysis to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions, as well as the evaluation of opinions, outcomes or human behavior. Students are expected to assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions.

In Diversity courses, students examine the historical processes and contemporary experiences characterizing social and cultural differences within the United States. Students engage with diversity as a dynamic concept related to human differences and their intersections, such as (but not limited to) race, gender identity, class, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, and (dis)abilities. Students critically analyze and evaluate how social inequities are constructed and affect the opportunities and constraints across the US population. Students analyze and reflect on the ways in which cultures and beliefs mediate their own and other people's understandings of themselves and an increasingly diverse U.S. society.

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication, and critical thinking:

SUBJECT AREA	CONTENT	COMMUNICATION	CRITICAL THINKING
	STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES		
<b>Social &amp; Behavioral Sciences</b>	<p>Identify, describe, and explain key themes, principles, &amp; terminology; the history, theory and/or methodologies used; and social institutions, structures and processes.</p> <p>Identify the extra-linguistic (e.g. race/ethnicity, gender) and linguistic factors indexing power relationships in specific types of discourse, such as media discourse, political discourse, and institutional discourse</p> <p>Mooney &amp; Evans Chapters 1-10</p>	<p>Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively.</p> <p>Articulate how these biases reflect, maintain, and create power relationships among individual speakers and in society</p>	<p>Apply formal and informal qualitative or quantitative analysis effectively to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions. Assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions.</p> <p>Describe, analyze, and uncover the various (strategic) biases in language using various linguistic techniques</p> <p>Mooney &amp; Evans Chapters 2-10</p>
<b>Assessment of Social Science SLOs</b>	<p>Exam 1 (Ch. 1-5) Exam 2 (Ch. 6-10) Reaction papers 1-3 Final Project presentation Symbolic capital HW Gender &amp; power HW</p>	<p>Discussion Leader Classroom discussions Final Project presentation Reaction papers 1-3</p>	<p>Exam 1 (Ch. 1-5) Exam 2 (Ch. 6-10) Final Project presentation Analyzing political speeches HW Symbolic capital HW Gender &amp; power HW</p>
<b>Diversity</b>	<p>Identify, describe and explain the historical processes and contemporary experiences characterizing diversity as a dynamic concept related to human differences and their intersections, such as (but not limited to) race, gender identity, class, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, and disability.</p> <p>Identify the intersection between linguistic markers and extra-linguistic features such as race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation, as well as how these linguistic factors index power relationships in specific types of discourse</p> <p>Mooney &amp; Evans Ch. 2, 6-10</p>	<p>The diversity designation is always in conjunctions with another category. Communication outcomes are listed in those subject areas.</p>	<p>Analyze and evaluate how social inequities are constructed and affect the opportunities and constraints of different groups in the United States. Analyze and reflect on the ways in which cultures and beliefs mediate understandings of an increasingly diverse US society.</p> <p>Provide students with analytical tools to uncover the various (strategic) biases in language, as well as how those biases reflect, maintain, and create power relationships in American society, especially regarding issues of race, gender identity, class, ethnicity, age, native language(s), and sexual orientation</p> <p>Mooney &amp; Evans Ch. 2, 6-10</p>
<b>Assessment of Diversity SLOs</b>	<p>Exam 1 (Ch. 1-5) Exam 2 (Ch. 6-10) Reaction papers 1-3 Final Project presentation Analyzing political speeches HW Symbolic capital HW Gender &amp; power HW</p>		<p>Exam 1 (Ch. 1-5) Exam 2 (Ch. 6-10) Final Project presentation Analyzing political speeches HW Symbolic capital HW Gender &amp; power HW</p>

### **TEXTBOOK & COURSE MATERIALS:**

Mooney, A., and Evans, B. (2014). *Language, Society & Power: An Introduction* (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.). NY: Routledge.  
A copy of this textbook will be put on reserve in [Library West](#).

All other supplementary materials will be available on the class *Canvas* site under “Pages”. You will select from among these readings to complete your reactions papers and homework assignments.

### **Selection of supplementary articles**

#### Chapter 2: Language, thought, and representation

Pullum, G. (1989). The Great Eskimo Vocabulary Hoax. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory*, 7, p. 275-281.  
Moss, L. (2014, June 9). [Does the language you speak influence how you think?](#) *Mother Nature Network*.

#### Chapter 3: Language & Politics

Rosenberg, P. (2011) [The economy is a ‘machine’, not a ‘body’  
Mass Shooting or Terrorist Attack? It depends on your party](#)

#### Chapter 4: Language & the Media

[Conservatives accuse Facebook of Trending Bias](#)  
[How to Fake a Feminist Hashtag](#)

#### Chapter 5: Linguistic Landscapes

[The Story behind Banksy](#)

#### Chapter 6: Language & Gender

[Talking to boys the way we talk to girls](#)  
[I’m not mad; that’s just my RBF](#)  
[Students see male professors as brilliant geniuses, female professors as bossy and annoying](#)  
[Sure, these women are winning Olympic medals, but are they single?](#)

#### Chapter 7: Language & Ethnicity

[Declaring ‘That’s me’ and empowering Latinas](#)  
[Coding “white trash” in Academia](#)  
[How Iggy Azalea Mastered Her ‘Blaccent’](#)

#### Chapter 8: Language & Age

[Does digital, by default, exclude older people?](#)  
[The cruelty of calling older adults ‘sweetie’ or ‘honey’](#)  
[This is what ‘adulthood’ means](#)

#### Chapter 9: Language & Symbolic Capital

[Potato chips and class](#)  
[Amazon’s takeover of Whole Foods is a fascinating study in class identity](#)

#### Chapter 10: Global Englishes

[Indian Officials ordered to ditch English for Hindi](#)  
[Brexit and an Anglosphere prison](#)

### **ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:**

Your attendance and participation in class is significant to your success in the class. Attendance will be taken daily. It is your responsibility to look for and be sure you have signed the roll sheet by the end of class. If you have not signed the roll sheet, you will be counted as absent. If you come to class unprepared, you may be asked to leave and counted as absent for that class period. NOTE: In the rare case of class being canceled, you will likely be given an assignment to do instead. In order to receive credit for your attendance/participation grade for that day, you must submit that assign by Midnight on Canvas on the day it is due. Always check your email before class for updates from me.

**How absences affect your grade:**

You are allowed 3 unexcused absences (or 3 hours in the case of T/TH classes) for whatever reason, so it is not necessary to explain why you missed class. In general, reasons for an excused absence from or failure to participate in class include serious illness or hospitalization, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays, and participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition, or debate. Absences from class for court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena) are also excused. Here is the point deduction for absences over 3 hours:

- 4th absence = automatic minus 20 points from attendance/participation (A/P) grade, 5<sup>th</sup> absence another 20 points deducted from the A/P grade; and so on for all absences after 3. Once all participation points are used up, points will be deducted from your final grade.

**How tardiness affects your grade:**

Excessive tardiness or leaving early will affect your grade. You must be in class at least 40 minutes for each 50-minute segment to get credit for that 50-minute block. Three (3) tardies (entering over 10 min late or leaving 10 min early) will count as one absence as described above.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS:**

Late assignments or make-up exams will not be permitted without a University-approved absence. No late work is accepted for unexcused absences.

**STUDENT CONDUCT:**

The Dial Center for Written and Oral Communication strives for a classroom climate that is comfortable for all. Students are expected to behave according to the UF student code of conduct in their classes. This means treating their instructors and fellow classmates with respect. To ensure a positive learning environment, students should not: make complaints publicly (in front of other students); attack the instructor verbally, physically, or in written form; or express reactions in the classroom that would bring harm to other students. Failure to meet the UF code of conduct can impact a student's class participation grade or result in referral to the UF judicial office. Class atmosphere can be made or broken by the approach that students take to the challenges of the course. Students that support others, show good humor in the face of obstacles, show dedication in the face of setbacks, and show grace when others are not doing as well will help to create a positive communication climate.

In a communication class, it is especially important for each of us to:

- Display respect for all members of the classroom – including the instructor and students;
- Pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and activities;
- Avoid racist, sexist, homophobic, or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom;
- Avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g., having private conversations, reading the newspaper, surfing the internet, doing work for other classes, making/receiving cell phone calls, text messaging, etc.).

**ACCOMMODATIONS:**

Please inform me if I can do anything to make sure physical circumstances don't get in the way of your work. UF's official statement on ADA issues includes: "Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter, which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester." I'd appreciate your paperwork the first week of class.

Other resources are available at <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help> for:

- Counseling and Wellness resources
- Disability resources
- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support

**U MATTER, WE CARE:**

Your well being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

**HONOR CODE:**

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: ‘On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.’ Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult the instructor for this class.” For more information, refer to UF’s Student Conduct & Honor Code, <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/students/student-conduct-code/>

**COURSE EVALUATIONS:**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

**GRADING SCALE: (TOTAL: 600 PTS)**

<u>Scale for Final Grades:</u>
A=558-600
A-=535-557
B+=522-534
B=498-521
B-=480-497
C+=462-479
C=438-461
C-=420-437
D+=402-419
D=378-401
D-=360-377
E=0-359

<u>Scale for Final Grades:</u>
A=93-100%
A-=90-92%
B+=87-89%
B=83-86%
B-=80-82%
C+=77-79%
C=73-76%
C-=70-72%
D+=67-69%
D=63-66%
D-=60-62%
E=0-59%

**COURSE HOMEPAGE:**

The course homepage on *Canvas* (<http://lss.at.ufl.edu>) will be central to the class. You will be able to access readings, worksheets, and the class discussion boards through the homepage. I will update it regularly with news and syllabus changes. Although I will make announcements in class and/or send e-mails regarding the assignments and schedule, it is your responsibility to check the homepage for updates.

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

**\*All assignments due by midnight on Canvas unless otherwise noted**

Date		Topic	Readings & HW <b>due</b> today
Week 1 8/20-8/24	M W F	----- Syllabus; <b>Why study language</b> -----	Mooney & Evans (Ch. 1)
Week 2 8/27-8/31	M W F	----- <b>Language, thought &amp; representation</b> -----	M & E (Ch. 2); Discussion leader sign up
Week 3 9/3-9/7	M W F	<b>NO CLASSES - LABOR DAY</b> <b>Language &amp; politics</b> -----	M & E (Ch. 3) <b>*Reaction paper 1 (Arrival) due Fri</b>
Week 4 9/10-9/14	M W F	-----; <i>Discussion Leader 1</i> -----; <i>Discussion Leader 2</i> <b>Language &amp; the media</b>	M & E (Ch. 4); <b>HW due Fri*</b>
Week 5 9/17-9/21	M W F	-----; <i>Discussion Leader 3</i> ----- -----; <i>Discussion Leader 4</i>	
Week 6 9/24-9/28	M W F	<b>Linguistic landscapes</b> ----- -----; <i>Discussion Leader 5</i>	M & E (Ch. 5) <b>*Extra credit Qs due Wed. (opt.)</b>
Week 7 10/1-10/5	M W F	----- <b>EXAM 1 (Chapters 1-5)</b> <b>Language &amp; gender</b>	M & E (Ch. 6)
Week 8 10/8-10/12	M W F	-----; <i>Discussion Leader 6</i> ----- -----	<b>HW due Fri*</b>
Week 9 10/15-10/19	M W F	Final Project Breakdown; <b>Language &amp; ethnicity</b> ----- -----	M & E (Ch. 11); M & E (Ch. 7)
Week 10 10/22-10/26	M W F	-----; <i>Discussion Leader 7</i> <b>Language &amp; age</b> -----	<b>*Reaction paper 2 due by Wed</b> M & E (Ch. 8)
Week 11 10/29-11/2	M W F	----- -----; <i>Discussion Leader 8</i> <b>NO CLASS - Homecoming</b>	
Week 12 11/5-11/9	M W F	<b>Language, class, &amp; symbolic capital</b> -----; <i>Discussion Leader 9</i> -----	M & E (Ch.9)

Week 13	M	<b>NO CLASS – VETERAN’S DAY</b>	
11/12-11/16	W F	<b>Global Englishes</b> -----; <i>Discussion Leader 10</i>	M & E (Ch.10) HW due Fri*
Week 14	M	-----; <i>Discussion Leader 11 (if needed)</i>	*Reaction paper 3 due
11/19-11/23	W F	<b>NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK</b> <b>NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK</b>	*Extra credit Qs due Tues. (opt.)
Week 15	M	<b>EXAM 2 (Chapters 6-10)</b>	
11/26-11/30	W F	Final Project Presentation Final Project Presentation	
Week 16	M	Final Project Presentation	
12/3-12/7	W	Final Project Presentation	PPT & bibliography due on Canvas*

**CHAPTER SYNOPSES:**

Chapter 1: Language?: Introduces us to the concept of language as a system with structure and variation. Discusses how people use language to exercise power and create rules about how individuals *should* use language.

Chapter 2: Language, thought, and representation: Discusses how the way people represent the world through language matters. (e.g. Sapir-Wharf Hypothesis). Every language choice, whether conscious or not, demonstrates an ideology.

Chapter 3: Language & Politics: Discusses how politics are everywhere (e.g. political movements, Higher Ed., toys, financial systems), and if we pay attention to the language used in these domains, we can uncover the ideologies underpinning the persuasive arguments they are making.

Chapter 4: Language & the Media: Explores the language used by the media and the role mass media plays in society and the power it exercises. We look at how language is filtered and represented, how lexical and syntactic choices belie ideological viewpoints, and how concepts like “expert” are socially constructed.

Chapter 5: Linguistic Landscapes: Explores the importance of physical signs and spatial representations as a means of communicating ideological information, as well as how individuals may use transgressive signs to counter conventional ideas.

Chapter 6: Language & Gender: Looks at how status differences between men and women are created through language and continue to promote everyday sexism.

Chapter 7: Language & Ethnicity: Discusses how language can be used to demonstrate/claim/challenge claims to an ethnicity or “authenticity” of belonging to an ethnic group.

Chapter 8: Language & Age: Explores how age plays an important role in social hierarchies, as well as the societal expectations and pressures to (not) use particular kinds of language during certain life stages. These expectations can constrain and/or marginalize members of a particular life stage.

Chapter 9: Language & Symbolic Capital: Explores the social construction of social class and its intersection with particular linguistic features. We also discuss how certain linguistic features associated with particular classes carry more ‘symbolic capital’ than others.

Chapter 10: Global Englishes: Explores the concept of linguistic imperialism and how/why global English can't be considered a single way of speaking. We discuss how every variety has its own values and meanings attached to it, some with more prestige than others.

### **DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS:**

Class attendance/participation (100 pts)  
Homework (100 pts)  
Reaction papers (25 pts x 3)  
Discussion Leader (50 pts)  
Exam 1 (100 points)  
Exam 2 (100 points)  
Final Presentation (75 points)

**TOTAL: 600 Pts**

Extra Credit: 15 pts. possible

### **Homework**

#### Gender & Power Assignment (40 pts)

Choose 1 set of at least 4 articles from the different Gender & Power supplementary articles on Canvas and do the following:

- 1) Write a short 1-2 paragraph synthesis and reaction to the articles, which includes how the articles do (or do not) contribute to the concept of "everyday sexism".
- 2) Choose 2 of the following concepts from the chapter and illustrate how they are either used or invoked in the articles you read:

<i>marked terms</i>	<i>gossip</i>
<i>'generic' he</i>	<i>hedging</i>
<i>word order</i>	<i>androcentric rule</i>
<i>semantic derogation</i>	<i>silence</i>
<i>tag questions</i>	

#### Analyzing Political Speeches (40 pts)

You will be given a current political speech (TBD) and need to do an analysis of it using the concepts we have studied in class.

- 1) Find 2 examples in the text demonstrating each of the following rhetorical tools:
  - contrasts*
  - parallelism*
  - inclusive vs. exclusive "we"*
  - presupposition*
  - metaphor*
- 2) George Lakoff talked about the difference in worldview between conservative and liberal discourse.
  1. Provide 2 examples illustrating "conservative" vs. "liberal" discourse in the speech and discuss why each example fits into that category.
  2. Did you feel that the speech fit the description of the "strict father figure", the "nurturing mother figure", both, or neither? Why or why not?



### Symbolic Capital Homework (20 pts)

For this assignment, you can either find your own article(s) that describe or mention (1) a community of practice and/or (2) a social class, OR choose one of the ones I've provided under supplemental articles for Chapter 9.

- 1) Identify the features the authors describe as being markers of that CoP
- 2) Identify whether these markers appear to be economic, social, or cultural capital, and why
- 3) Is this a stigmatized group (based on what you've read) or a prestige group? Why or why not?

You will answer the above questions for the CoP example and the social class example. Also, provide links to your articles at the end or attach the articles themselves.

### **Discussion Leader**

During Week 2, each student will sign up to present an article or media clip (as a pair/group) dealing with the theme we are discussing that week. Students signed up for a given week have a lot of freedom in choosing what they want to present, but whatever you choose should be interesting and serve a springboard for discussion with the rest of the class.

You and your partner(s) will post the article/clip on Canvas **at least** 5 days before your discussion day, along with **at least** 3 discussion Qs/directions you want the class to think about or do as they read/watch.

On discussion day, you will first present a very short overview of the article/clip to the class before leading a 20 min discussion on the article/clip. Your grade will be based on (1) choice of article/clip, (2) quality of discussion questions or activity to be done in class. (3) how well you facilitate interaction to keep the conversation moving, (4) general presentation skills, (5) preparedness

Students are strongly encouraged to talk to Prof. Butler in advance to go over article/clip choice and possible discussion questions/activity. Remember that this presentation is for a grade; you are expected to dress accordingly (business casual)! This means no jeans, cut-off, tanks, etc.

### **Reaction Papers**

We will be reading an array of supplementary articles (see section on supplemental course readings above) over the course of the semester. Students are required to write **3** reaction papers (25 pts. each) for any of the supplementary articles we read in class (they will be posted on Canvas). The first reaction paper will be a little different in that it will be a reaction to watching the movie *Arrival*. Reaction papers should be approximately 2-4 pages in length (double-spaced, 12-pt, Times New Roman font, 1" margins).

In each paper, you will briefly summarize the paper before explaining what you liked and/or didn't like about the paper and why. You will be expected to utilize the terminology we have learned on a given topic to talk about the article in your paper. Reaction papers are always due by midnight and will be submitted to CANVAS on the due date listed on the schedule.

### **Exams**

Exam 1 will be given in class and will cover material from the first 5 chapters of the book (Ch. 1-5). Exam 2 will cover material from the last 5 chapters of the book (Ch. 6-10). Both exams will be composed of definitions, T/F, multiple-choice questions, short answer or matching, and a short essay.

### **Final Project**

For your final project, you will choose one of the final projects themes I will give you and present it as a PowerPoint at the end of the semester to the class. On presentation days, you will have 7-8 minutes to present your project to the

class. More details about the final project will be discussed in class in Week 9. On the final day of class, your PPT and bibliography for the project will be due on Canvas.

Dress code on presentation day is business casual (e.g. no jeans, shorts, t-shirts, tank tops, PJs, etc.).

### **Extra Credit**

I will use some of the questions for the exams based on questions you have submitted. For extra credit, create 20 questions & answers for **one** of our two exams. Use multiple choice (4 choices) or T/F types of questions ONLY. Indicate the answers below each question and make sure multiple-choice questions have 4 possible answers each. (Note: Separate and label questions by Chapter.)

You must submit the Extra Credit on CANVAS by midnight (see schedule). Plan ahead. This set of questions is worth up to 10 points added to your total point score (out of 600) for the course. Note: you will not receive extra points for questions to both exams.

Additionally, I am always looking for real-world examples of language use in articles, video clips, etc. to use in class to demonstrate a particular theme. You may email me examples that you find that you think will be interesting to the rest of the class, and if I use it, you will receive 5 extra credit points.