### Course Title

**Language and Marketing**, Level: Master, ECTS: 10, Summer 2015

#### Lecturer: Dr. Dieter Thoma

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#### Time schedule and course outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Background reading (all)</th>
<th>Research papers / assignments (teams)</th>
<th>Team</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thu</td>
<td>02.07.</td>
<td>2+2h</td>
<td>Introduction, marketing and research basics</td>
<td><a href="http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.php">http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.php</a> Sutter et al. (2014)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>03.07.</td>
<td>2+2h</td>
<td>Language, meaning, and thought</td>
<td>Saeed (2009, Ch. 2, lg. &amp; thought), Wolff &amp; Holmes (2011)</td>
<td>Chen (2013) &amp; TED talk Sutter et al. (2014)</td>
<td>DT 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>06.07.</td>
<td>2+2h</td>
<td>Branding and sound symbolism</td>
<td>Saeed (2009, Ch. 1, semantics semiotics) Robson (2011, ss)</td>
<td>Klink (2000)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Argro et al. (2010)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu</td>
<td>09.07.</td>
<td>2+2h</td>
<td>Framing and labelling effects on decision making</td>
<td>Saeed (2009, Ch.3, word meaning)</td>
<td>Irmak et al. (2011) Thoma &amp; Barth (under review)</td>
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<td>Fri</td>
<td>10.07.</td>
<td>2+2h</td>
<td>Case study: brand name development</td>
<td>FDA / European Regulations for pharma ads</td>
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<td>Fri</td>
<td>17.07.</td>
<td>2+2h</td>
<td>Case study: Google AdWords</td>
<td>Kövecses (2006, Ch. 3, p. 39-48)</td>
<td>Internet research</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>Tue</td>
<td>21.07.</td>
<td>2+2h</td>
<td>Analysis, results and discussion of joint research project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>22.07.</td>
<td>2h</td>
<td>Revision, wrap-up</td>
<td>Prepare Q&amp;A, mock exam questions</td>
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**Week 4 Exam Preparation**
References / Reading assignment (*compulsory for all students as indicated above)


Thoma, D., & Barth, M. (under review). Only the wrong words hurt. Short online video tutorials reduce verbal overshadowing of consumer preference and choice quality.


Aims of the course

This course provides a range of interdisciplinary contents and sources recent empirical work. It has high practical relevance for applied research on marketing communication.

In this course, students acquire basic knowledge in central areas of psycholinguistics and marketing communication. They learn to recognize relations between semantic and processing structures in language and the effects of linguistically determined advertising and market research instruments. The practical aim is that students learn to apply this new knowledge analytically and constructively to solve authentic marketing problems. As a by-product this course provides training in important skills such as reading and comprehending research articles and basic statistics, giving informative and concise presentations and teamwork.

Main issues

Marketing communication and research heavily rely on language. Advertisers use language to convince consumers to buy a certain product. Market researchers ask consumers what they think about a product or what kind of product consumers think they need. Obviously, the success of such marketing efforts depends on linguistic and psycholinguistic processes.

Recently, the application of psycholinguistic theory to marketing communication has become a topic of great prominence in the field of consumer behavior. The use of certain linguistic structures aims at increasing activating and cognitive psychological processes, or at measuring such non-linguistic psychological variables as attention, attitude and memory. In this course, we build up psycholinguistic background knowledge and simultaneously analyze how this knowledge has been applied to the marketing context. Selected topics are:

- Linguistic structure and brand name construction
- Linguistic framing and manipulation of consumer behavior
- Semantic relations in consumer’s decision behavior
- Linguistic structure and questionnaire design in market research
- Potentials and limits of subliminal advertising
- Conceptual metaphors in marketing communications
- Maximes of conversation and their violation in advertising
- Narrative structure of commercials and emotional responses
- Effects of bilingual language processing and code-switching in marketing communications

Moreover, we analyze and discuss several case studies. For example, based on authentic data from a product manager, we look at how delicate an issue language is in ads for pharmaceuticals, which are highly regulated in most countries. In small teams, students will design an initial draft for a pharmaceutical ad campaign. Also, we look at how ‘Google AdWords’ tries to emulate semantic networks in the mental lexicon. In this case study, student teams create a marketing plan for a small business including keyword selection and purchase on ‘Google AdWords’.

Teaching methodology

This course is an interactive seminar. There are relatively short sequences of lecturing combined with in-class experiments or case studies and group work/exercises. There are reading assignments for each week. Regular homework exercises allow students to thoroughly prepare for each session. Students are expected to take over specific responsibilities in small teams. Each team gives a short presentation on a reading assignment/research article. Some case studies are developed over several sessions and may require extra research outside the classroom. In a joint research project we conduct and analyze throughout the three
weeks of class, students gain some first-hand experience in empirical research. The course provides room for the discussion of individual questions and for exam preparation.

**Prerequisites**

This course does not require any specific previous subject knowledge. As it is interdisciplinary in nature, however, it is very fruitful if students can add expertise from areas such as:

- Market research
- Advertising
- Psycholinguistics
- Cognitive psychology
- Empirical research methodology
- Statistics
- Communication studies

**Learning outcome**

As a result of this course students must:

- Have acquired basic knowledge in central areas of psycholinguistics and marketing communication.
- Be able to recognize relations between semantic and processing structures in language and the effects of linguistically determined marketing/advertising and market research instruments.
- Be able to apply this new knowledge analytically and constructively to solve authentic problems in market research and advertising.
- Have improved their skills in reading and comprehending research articles, giving informative and concise presentations, working in teams effectively.

**Assessment**

The grade for the course consists of two parts:

- Coursework counting 40%
- 3-hour written take-home exam counting 60%

The grade for the coursework is composed of the following elements:

- Oral presentation of a sequence of a research article as part of a team presentation or of a full article as an individual student (depending on text length and course size) [20%]
- Several individual small-scale assignments to be completed in class or as homework. These assignments are related to case study discussions and the joint research project [20%]

**Daily timing**

Due to a high number of applications, this course has a special organization. It has a two daily parts. A lecture-style first part and an seminar-style second part. For the second part, the students will be divided into two equal sized groups.

- Part 1 for all students, every day: **8.00 to 10.00**
- Part 2A for students in Group A: 10.30 to 12.30
- Part 2B for students in Group B: 13.30 to 15.30