Course Outline
This module looks at techniques from Critical Discourse Analysis, an offshoot of linguistics, that can be used to analyse written and spoken language. These techniques allow us to reveal how language can be used to persuade in ways that would not necessarily be detectable on a casual reading or listening. Critical Discourse Analysis looks at the smaller details of lexical and grammatical choices in language in order to reveal what broader messages are being communicated. What kinds of identities, values, ideas and sequences of action are being communicated, often in quite subtle ways? Critical Discourse Analysis sees language as fundamental in the way that we all attempt to shape situations and society in our own interests. Therefore in analysing language we are examining the motivated linguistic choices of individuals, groups and institutions. This can lead us to a closer understanding of the linguistic strategies they use and in turn allow us more clearly to see the kind of world they wish to make. Each lecture looks at one of several tools of analysis.

Reading material
For each weeks lecture there is a list of useful references. But for the most part the course follows the structure of my own book: Machin, D. and Mayr, A. (2012) How to do Critical Discourse Analysis: A Multimodal Approach, London, Sage. Here a large number of sample texts are worked through and more student activities given.

Lecture Outline

- Lecture 1 Introduction

In this session we introduce some of the basic concepts that we will use throughout the course that underpin this particular approach to language analysis that we will be using in this module. We look at a number of news texts that help is to think about the importance of language and what kinds of tools we will need in order to understand how it can be used to manipulate.

Readings:

- **Lecture 2 Lexis Analysis and Quoting verbs**

We begin with an example of simple lexical analysis. We simply ask if there is a predominance of particular kinds of topic related words in a text. What if a political speech seems to contain lots of words that evoke illness to refer to certain social processes? We look at some patterns that point to changes in the kinds of discourses we find in the media that point to broader cultural changes. In the second part of the lecture we look at quoting verbs or verbs of saying. One simple way that people can be evaluated in texts or speech is simply through the way that their speech is represented. How are they said to speak? This can be one simple way that what people say is represented as being legitimate, authoritative, or otherwise as silly or unimportant. This is one way that such evaluation can be achieved without overt commentary.

**Reading:**

- **Lecture 3 Representational strategies**

There are many ways that we can shape the way that a reader or listener might understand a texts by manipulating the way that they are encouraged to align themselves alongside or against the participants. This is one way to represent what people to unfavourably without actually commenting upon it. This is by the way communities are evoked through the words ‘us’ and ‘them’ but also through a host of other ways that people are categorised and represented, by how they look, what they do, their relationships. Simple choices can shape the way we perceive a person’s actions.

**Readings:**

Positioning of actors in clauses

- Lecture 4 The representation of action
The study of transitivity or action can give us access to who does what and how in a text. Closer examination of this can reveal power relations that we would not necessarily notice on a casual reading. Some participants may be represented as particularly active, although we can then ask what kinds of actions these are. Often very busy participants can be represented as the most passive. Therefore this can be one way to in fact hide who actually has the agency.

Readings:
Discourse Society. 1995; 6: 81-106
Racism in the News: A Critical Discourse Analysis of News Reporting in Two Australian Newspapers
http://www.cjc-online.ca/index.php/journal/article/viewFile/1177/1099

Passive Voice

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**Lecture 5 nominalisation and presupposition**

In this session we look at language strategies for making processes appear as taken for granted things. Also we look at the way that we can strategically generate accepted states of affairs without actually articulating them.

**Readings:**

Nominalisation

Presupposition
In this session we look at linguistic features for communicating levels of truth and certainty. In combination we can use these to give great sense of commitment to issues while at the same time avoiding actually committing to anything. We also look at devices for distancing from issues and how we can detect clear areas of moral ambiguity or awkwardness being glossed.

Readings

Modals

Mood and Modality


Hedging


Overlexicalisation

- Lecture 7 metaphorical tropes

In this session we look at a number of linguistic devices that can be used to transport meanings from one domain to another. While these can be used to help illustrate the nature of something they also serve to obscure and shape out perceptions of it.

**Readings**

Rhetorical tropes
• **Lecture 8 Language of Advertising**

In this session we look at a number of the peculiar linguistic features of advertising and how these have seeped into other genres of communication.

**Readings**

• **Lecture 9 Recontextualisation of social practice**

In this session we look at how linguistic strategies can be used to recontextualise particular events. Here we look how we can replace issues with kinds of abstractions and evaluations in order to conceal, legitimise and transform events. We look at one particular example of climate change.

**Readings**