



CMNS 3500 - Language and Power: Clarity, Accessibility and Persuasion in Health Messaging



- Territorial Acknowledgement

Nov 12	Controversial Claims I: Vaccine skepticism, alternative medicine, and language of anti-science discourse. (Student Seminars) Submit Proposal for Unessay
Nov 19	Controversial Claims II: Grammar of misinformation—modality, passives, nominalization (Student Seminars) Submit Grading Template for Unessay
Nov 26	Social Media and the language of health: Clickbait, metaphor, sensationalism. (Student Seminars) Submit Unessay (30%)
Dec 3	Final In-class task (15%): Designing ethical health communication: Navigating misinformation, accessibility, and trust

Where we're going today

01

Vaccine Skepticism,
Vaccine Denialism,
Alternative
Medicine and Anti-
Science Discourse

02

Work on Unessay

03

Proposals for
Unessay

health fake mandate liberty
pharma fear freedom choice dangerous
fear freedom natural
poison control hoax risk
conspiracy rights dangerous agenda
natural toxic
control mandate
rights choice research conspiracy
government truth
toxic experimental
liberty research truth health
fake plandemic
experimental poison
plandemic microchip microchip big

agenda hoax
big pharma
risk government

- RED ALERT! This Is the Hill to Die On



Critical Reflection on Anti-Science Narratives

Discourse Analysis Fundamentals

Discourse analysis studies language as social action, revealing meaning, identity, and power relations in communication. SFL is one tool for Discourse Analysis.

Anti-Science Narratives

These narratives use rhetorical strategies to question scientific authority and foster skepticism about science.

Vaccine Hesitancy and Denial

Vaccine hesitancy involves delays or refusals influenced by misinformation, while denial is rooted in entrenched ideological beliefs.

Impact on Public Perception

Analyzing language in these narratives helps understand how discourse shapes public views on science and health.



"Vaccines are experimental and dangerous. Do your own research!"



"The government wants to control us through mandatory shots."



"I'm just asking questions: Why are so many people getting sick after vaccines?"



"Natural immunity is better than toxic chemicals in vaccines."

- What metaphors are used?
- How is authority constructed or challenged?
- What pronouns indicate group identity?
- How is certainty or doubt expressed?

Rhetorical and Linguistic Strategies

Emotional Lexical Choices

Metaphors Framing Threats

Ingroup and Outgroup Pronouns

Modality and Credibility

Vaccine Hesitancy	Vaccine Denialism
<p><i>“I’m not putting something in my body that was rushed. We don’t know the long-term effects of these COVID shots.”</i></p>	<p><i>“COVID shots are poison. They’re killing people and the government is hiding it. Wake up!”</i></p>
<p><i>“This is all about control, not health. The government wants to track us through these vaccines.”</i></p>	<p><i>“This isn’t a vaccine—it’s gene therapy. They’re changing your DNA and no one is talking about it.”</i></p>
<p><i>“COVID isn’t even that dangerous. Why take an experimental jab for something like the flu?”</i></p>	<p><i>“COVID was created to sell vaccines. It’s all a scam by Big Pharma and Trudeau.”</i></p>

Category	Example Post	Linguistic Features	Rhetorical Strategy
Vaccine Hesitancy	“I’m not putting something in my body that was rushed. We don’t know the long-term effects.”	Modal verbs (don’t know), cautious tone	Risk amplification, questioning
Vaccine Denialism	“COVID shots are poison. They’re killing people and the government is hiding it.”	Strong negative adjectives (poison), certainty	Delegitimization, fear appeals
Anti-Science Discourse	“Climate change is exaggerated by elites to control our economy. Real Canadians know the truth.”	Collective identity (Real Canadians), framing	Conspiratorial framing, freedom rhetoric
Core Themes	Safety concerns, uncertainty	Absolute rejection, conspiracy	Distrust of expertise, politicization

Why Anti-Science Rhetoric Is Growing—and How to Push Back

How are Dr. Peter Hotez's credentials established?

How are statistics used?

Listen for how "deaths" are described?

Listen for the words used that are scientific. Write some down for discussion after.

Listen for words that are confrontational. Write some down for discussion after.

What is the impact of using the term "the new normal?"

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/audio/9.6752811>



Moving onto your Creative Project – the Unessay

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- Review requirements on course website
 - Submit proposal in Moodle
 - Approval by tomorrow evening
 - Begin to work on project and consider grading rubric



**PROTEIN-INFUSED
EVERYTHING**