

# Emotion-Based Rhetorical Devices

PHI 200  
(Erion)

- (1) *euphemism* - an expression with a neutral or positive association substituted for one that ordinarily carries a negative association
  - Ex) **restroom/ bathroom** (themselves euphemisms for French-sounding **toilet**)
  - Ex) **domestic partnership** (not living together)
  - Ex) **pre-owned/ pre-enjoyed**
  - Ex) **freedom fighters, soft targets, friendly fire**
- (2) *dysphemism* - an expression with a negative association substituted for one that ordinarily carries a positive or neutral association
  - Ex) **shacking up/ living in sin**
  - Ex) **terrorist/ rebel**
- (3) *rhetorical analogy* - a comparison designed to affect attitudes or behavior
  - Ex) comparing **George W. Bush's Presidency** to that of **Jimmy Carter**
  - Ex) comparing **George W. Bush's Presidency** to that of **FDR**
- (4) *rhetorical definition* - a definition designed to affect attitudes or behavior
  - Ex) A **liberal** is **someone who likes to raise taxes.**
  - Ex) A **conservative** is **someone who doesn't care about the poor.**
  - Ex) **Capital punishment** (itself a euphemism) is **institutionalized murder.**
  - Ex) A **criminal** is **someone who doesn't think the way Big Brother thinks.**
- (5) *rhetorical explanation* - an explanation designed to affect attitudes or behavior
  - Ex) War protesters disrupt traffic **because they hate America.** (i.e., they don't believe in the war)
  - Ex) **Clinton pulled the classic liberal move to balance the budget.** (i.e., he raised taxes)
- (6) *stereotype* - an oversimplified generalization about all members of a certain class
  - Ex) **the liberals, the right-wingers, the Communists, the homosexuals, the Catholics**

# Linguistic Rhetorical Devices

PHI 200  
(Erion)

- (1) *innuendo* - a form of suggestion containing implicit criticism (criticism “between the lines”)  
Ex) Yes, my landlord told the truth, **this time**.
- (2) *loaded (complex) question* - a question that rests on some unwarranted assumption (i.e., a form of innuendo phrased as a question)  
Ex) **Have you got your drinking under control yet?**  
Ex) **Which do you chose, science or the environment?**  
Ex) Kent Brockman: **Apu, will you ever stop selling spoiled meat?**
- (3) *weaseler* - an expression used to protect a claim by weakening it  
Ex) You **may** have already won \$10 million.  
Ex) **If** we draw your name...  
Ex) Four out of 5 dentists **surveyed** recommend sugarless gum **for their patients who chew gum**.
- (4) *downplayer* - an expression that undermines some claim’s significance  
Ex) Exxon/Mobil earned a **mere** \$36 billion last year.  
Ex) The AMA says American should eat less fat; **nevertheless**, I really like the taste of cheese.  
Ex) She got her “degree” from a correspondence school.
- (5) *horse laugh* - persuasion that substitutes ridicule or sarcasm for good reasoning  
Ex) So you’re thinking of buying a Hyundai – **ha!**
- (6) *hyperbole* - extravagant overstatement  
Ex) if my car got dinged in the parking lot, and I tell you it was **totally destroyed**  
Ex) describing the mission of the National Rifle Association as **the campaign to arm every man, woman, and child in America**
- (7) *proof surrogate* - an expression that suggests evidence or proof for some claim without actually citing this evidence  
Ex) **Studies show** that exposure to television violence leads children to commit violent crime.  
Ex) **It is obvious that** government needs to be smaller.