ANALYZING VISUAL ARGUMENTS
(PART I)
Introduction to Chapter 9
OBJECTIVES

To help students understand that effective (visual) arguments speak to the values, knowledge, and interests of the intended audience.

To help students understand how visual and verbal elements can work together to produce rhetorical effects that create an effective implicit argument.
To understand how visual images can produce an argument, it helps to understand how design elements work together to create a visual argument. Chapter 9 focuses on four elements:

- **USE OF TYPE**
- **USE OF SPACE**
- **USE OF COLOR**
- **USE OF IMAGES**
TYPE: DELIBERATELY USED TO IMPACT THE ARGUMENT VISUALLY

Sans Serif?
Serif?

ALL CAPS?
lower case?

a Combination?
Silly?

Formal?
Fancy?
HERE'S AN EXAMPLE

How does the type (font, punctuation, all caps) influence the message of this ad?
What’s the message? How does layout convey the message?
COLOR: CONTRIBUTES TO THE EMOTIONAL APPEAL OF AN ARGUMENT

What’s the message? How does color influence the message?
IMAGES:
WORTH 1,000 WORDS?
KAIROS: APPRECIATING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MOMENT
Often, the impact of a visual argument is directly related to the timeliness of the argument and the intended audience’s awareness of current events.

Political cartoonists take advantage of the “kairotic” moment by publishing their cartoons in the immediate aftermath of specific current events.
If you have been paying attention to current events, you will be able to appreciate the arguments being made in the cartoons on the following slides.

Get out a piece of paper and write down these questions. Then, apply these questions to each cartoon.

• What is the issue being addressed in this cartoon?
• What event prompted the cartoonist to create this argument?
• Who do you think the target audience is?
• What is the core argument (claim + reason) being made?
• How effective or persuasive is this argument to you?
DON'T WORRY.
I CAN ALWAYS TAKE YOU TO THE E.R.!
ISSUE: Does Mitt Romney care about the people who are receiving government assistance?

KAIROTIC EVENT: Release of a hidden video clip in which Romney is heard talking at a fund-raising event and suggests that “47% of Americans” who receive government assistance probably won’t vote for him.

TARGET AUDIENCE: Liberals who prefer Obama over Romney.

ARGUMENT: Romney’s own words (gaffe) have caused him to fumble his chances to win the election.

PERSUASIVE?
ISSUE: Media liberal bias

KAIROTIC EVENT: Presidential election in November

TARGET AUDIENCE: Conservatives who believe the press “piling on” Romney in order to promote Obama.

ARGUMENT: The media are not doing their job as neutral reporters of the facts; rather, they are actively engaged in “the game” (on the field) in order to help Obama defeat Romney.

PERSUASIVE?
SADLY, THEY AREN'T EVEN REPLACEMENT REFS...!
ISSUE: Media liberal bias

KAIROTIC EVENT/S: NFL referee strike; bad call by replacement refs in the Seattle Seahawk/Green Bay Packer game; presidential election

TARGET AUDIENCE: Conservatives who do not trust the mainstream media to report events accurately.

ARGUMENT: The media are like corrupt referees who will call the game for Obama no matter who actually caught the ball (won the election?)

PERSUASIVE?
Chapter 9 introduces us to four types of visual arguments:

✧ Posters and Flyers
✧ Public Affairs Advocacy Arguments
✧ Cartoons
✧ Web Pages