



# HOW TO DO Semiotics in Seven Weeks

Let's face it. Most books on semiotics are hard to finish.

Many are dense, unclear, full of jargon and fail to give a proper overview of the subject.

Many taster courses leave you with just that – a taste – but do not lead to genuine transformation or leave participants with useable skills.

I took a scientific approach to developing this course. I conducted 25 in depth interviews with brand professionals like you in order to identify the 'pain points' in semiotic learning. Addressing these core issues has enabled me to develop a course specifically designed to be accessible to all.

This is an intensive immersion in semiotics and a rigorous boot camp especially developed for brand communication professionals. You will work with fellow semiotic learners from around the world and in the process, gain proficiency in actually 'doing' semiotics.

This course is now tried and tested. Over 100 students have now been through the course and the course gets rave reviews from course alumni:

'One of the most valuable aspects of the course was the excellent case studies, a result of many years of experience. Chris' impressive expertise was incredible to watch being put into action.'

'I was approaching semiotics in a very personalised, and unstructured manner, but through this course I have now understood there is a proper process to go through to arrive at a code map and to understand culture. I had heard about all these concepts, but this has given me a robust understanding.'

This course does not just equip you with the fundamentals. It gives you a process you can use right away.

But it is not just about hitting the learning outcomes. This is a course with multiple learning tracks within it. You not only learn from the tutor, but you learn from the readings and in the group task and from each other. This course opens up the world of semiotics a world that now makes sense. Participants leave feeling energised and enthusiastic to learn more.

## WHO IS THIS COURSE FOR?

I often get asked: what sort of people come on this course?

Well, the statistics from the course shows that most (80%) of our delegates had not studied semiotics before and only (25%) had read a book on semiotics. 80% of delegates self-defined themselves as either beginners or elementary in their standard. What seemed however to unify delegates is that 80% had previously worked with a semiotician. We can speculate that this is primarily what inspired them to find out more.

In terms of the occupation of delegates, so far, we've had Qualitative Researchers, Product Designers, Creative Directors, Independent Consultants, Brand Managers and client-side Insight Directors. This is a course which is multi-faceted enough to appeal to and cater for a wide gamut.

But ultimately the main thing that unifies people who come on this course is their desire to learn more about semiotics – either to practise it, commission it, or because they've always wanted to get more clarity on the subject.

## COURSE OUTLINE

### LESSON ONE - WHAT IS BRAND SEMIOTICS??

- What is semiotics? Definitions. An interactive visual exercise, decoding culture, matrix of meaning
- Applied semiotics as an inter-disciplinary subject and its mission in branding
- Live decoding, dissecting layers of meaning images: ads, art, news etc

### LESSON TWO - BRANDS AS BUNDLES OF SIGNS

- Brands originate as marks and become semiotic marketing systems
- Signifiers and signifieds, concept formation, identifying cues
- How to analyse various aspects of brands and the brand audit

### LESSON THREE - IDENTIFYING THE CODES

- What is a code? A system of signs, a shortcut to meaning etc
- How to find codes via pattern recognition, clustering, cue validity
- How to identify codes and finalise a code set

### LESSON FOUR - PLOTTING YOUR CODE MAP

- NOTNESS and Binary Oppositions as cultural logic
- Challenger brands as examples of binary thinking
- How to establish the axes and name the quadrants

### LESSON FIVE - DECODING CULTURAL CHANGE

- What is Culture? Definition of culture as a set of interlocking codes
- Case studies which showcase the power of culture in communication
- Global scope and an intro to residual, dominant and emergent codes

### LESSON SIX - BEST PRACTICE & GROUP TUTORIALS

- How to become a semiotician: from competence to expertise
- Blending with other research methodologies, where semiotics fits
- Psychology of semiotics analysis: some pitfalls and quality criteria

### LESSON SEVEN - CODE MAP PRESENTATIONS + FEEDBACK

- 25 mins group presentations with feedback from tutor
- Presentation: case study process of creating a code map
- Reciprocal feedback and presentation of final certificates

The group task will be briefed in Week 2 giving you 5 weeks to complete the task. Weeks 2, 3 and 4 are designed to directly equip participants with the tools to do the code map task. Week 1, 5 and 6 are more of 'the panorama' that surrounds these core fundamentals.

This means that whilst it is ruthlessly pragmatic, the course isn't just one-dimensional and gives participants insight into semiotics as an industry / methodology as well as how to do it. The beauty of the course is that you learn through multiple tracks / channels.

## FEATURES

- A seven-week course that can be fit around your professional commitments and 'life stuff' (everything is recorded and archived to be accessed on demand).
- Learning is multi-faceted; by way of lectures, seminars, Q&A sessions, live decodings, video recordings, Slack thread discussions and one on one tutorials.
- This is not a 'survey' course on semiotic theory – it is a practical 'how-to' guide to 'doing semiotics' that is distilled to the essence – enriched by academic readings.
- Every participant attains basic proficiency in 'doing semiotics of brands', by creating a 'code map' through following a step by step process within 7 weeks.

## BENEFITS

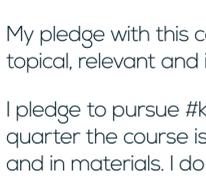
- Gives participants a workable overview of applied semiotics, including a glossary and the tools and tacit knowledge (beyond books) they need to do semiotics.
- Gives participants more confidence, rigour and a tried and tested process in actually doing a semiotic analysis, producing useful findings and adding value.
- Offers the benefit of the distillation of Chris's 20 years' experience of practising semiotics and writing about it and the chance for one-on-one personal tutorials.
- The course is designed to be both interactive and fun: the ethos is less about knowledge transfer but on practising skills together. Thursdays are always fun!

## TESTIMONIALS FROM THE COURSE



**Finally I figured a way to go beyond self-teaching, and managed to find a guru in Semiotics! Thank you Chris Arning for the most awesome 7 weeks of learning! It really helped demystify and elucidate concepts that I was just fumbling with, in books.**

Divya Maheshwari, Senior Account Manager, Kantar Millward Brown, India



**Learning about semiotics used to be an arduous task: Deciphering esoteric theories and impenetrable academic papers... UNTIL Chris Arning at Creative Semiotics developed How to Do Semiotics in Seven Weeks. In Seven Weeks, I've gone to a semiotics fanboy to someone able to identify and map codes, completing my first analysis on the Healthy Snacks category.**

David Warren, Independent Strategist, Australia



**I've taken other semiotic workshops, and none can be compared to Chris' course. It was so well organized, succinct, the delivery of materials, articles, case studies, etc., gave deep insight into the discipline of semiotics, and the guidance on how to apply analysis to code mapping while working in groups was the golden nugget. Having access to such an abundance of semiotic brilliance from Chris, one of the best semioticians in the field, was a delight and a privilege.**

Susana Franek, Cultural Anthropologist, Ethnology, United States

## MY PLEDGE

My pledge with this course is to feed your passion and enthusiasm with content that is topical, relevant and interesting, and teach you a method that is streamlined and effective.

I pledge to pursue #kaizen or constant improvement. What this means is between each quarter the course is modified and tweaked from the previous one both in course design and in materials. I do this according to student feedback collated from the previous cohort.

I am so confident of the course content that I can guarantee you will increase proficiency in semiotics. I have priced this course to reflect the value I pack into it. If not; money back!

**COURSE PRICE: £1279 + VAT**

**EARLY BIRD price of £979 + VAT**

Since 2021 we have been offering a scholarship place on each cohort to a student delegate to make this learning more accessible to this target group – do ask Pavla for more details.

## COURSE TUTOR BIO:

Chris Arning is Founder-Director of Creative Semiotics Ltd., and Co-Founder of Semiofest: a Celebration of Semiotic Thinking. He has led over 200 commercial semiotics projects and has over 30,000 hours of semiotics experience. He taught the MA on Brands and Meaning at Warwick University for 5 years and is a sessional tutor at the University of Creative Arts.

Chris is partly self-taught in semiotics and has qualified with an unconventional apprenticeship. You'll be working with someone who knows what it's like to be frustrated in semiotic learning. Chris is not just a semiotician but a creative, researcher and people person and he enjoys working with participants to create a fun and productive learning environment.



For more information please mail: [pavla@creativesemiotics.co.uk](mailto:pavla@creativesemiotics.co.uk)

