

Bruce Austin: Award in Advertising & Public relations

First, I note this is Katherine Robert's second Kearsse Award. Last year, her award-winning paper was for our Persuasion class with Dr. Murray and focused on Dove's advertising campaign for "true beauty."

Quantitative Research Methods is one of two required communication research methods courses. The course project insists that each student invent and develop a fully formed proposal for an empirical research study. For many, this kind of thinking and this style of writing is novel. Project proposals must focus on phenomena associated with the communication discipline, carefully articulate the research problem to be investigated and state hypotheses or ask research questions, offer a compelling scholarly and social rationale that legitimizes the enterprise, present a representative and critical review of the related empirical research literature, and specify precisely the scientific procedures to be followed to test hypotheses or respond to research questions. Students are reminded their proposals for research must be so clear that any "kid in the hall" will be able to implement the project and that in empirical research there is no such thing as "you know what I mean."

Katherine Robert, an Advertising & Public Relations senior, created an engaging proposal entitled "Measuring the Effects of Viewing Plastic Surgery Reality Television Programs on College Students' Self-esteem and Body-Image Satisfaction." Katherine's proposal is a model for scientific clarity and precision that creatively and successfully weaves together mass communications theoretical constructs to form an ambitious and complicated experimental research design involving two dependent variables. Her text engages the reader, convincingly demonstrates the research project's significance, and offers an incisive and thoughtful summary of previous research. Katherine's paper clearly lays out a valid and reliable set of self-report measures nested within an after-only experiment design. Her proposal appropriately acknowledges methodological limitations and specifies her project's heuristic dimensions. Katherine's work and her writing are first-rate. She has chosen to pursue completion of

this proposal for her Senior Thesis in Communication and we can all look forward to learning the study's results in just a few weeks.

Last, Katherine's Award-winning paper today is linked conceptually with last year's. Clearly, Katherine's skill and imaginative ability to express herself transcends methodological boundaries.