

# Katherine Roehrick

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Major: Advertising and Marketing  
University: University of Missouri-Columbia  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Paul Bolls  
Mentor Department: Advertising  
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## **The effects of arousing video on attention and memory for attack vs. non-attack political advertisements**

Katie Roehrick and Paul Bolls

During the election season, it may appear that television viewers are bombarded with political advertisements. Furthermore, it may also appear that the majority of these advertisements are routinely negative. It has been said that candidates use attack advertisements because they work; that is to say, attack advertisements are more memorable than non-attack advertisements. Much research has been done on political advertisements, with mixed conclusions on the effectiveness of attack versus non-attack advertisements. My research on the effect of arousing advertisements attempts to add clarity to the question of if and why attack advertisements affect memory to a greater degree than non-attacks advertisements. I will directly test the hypothesis that memory is not necessarily affected by the content of the advertisements (i.e. attack or non-attack), but rather by the production values of the advertisements (i.e. how arousing the advertisement is). If this hypothesis is true, the direct implication is that candidates do not have to design a negative attack advertisement to be successful in their campaign, but rather they can create arousing, positive advertisements that focus solely on themselves and their position. Consequently, I believe that advertisers will be able to use the results of my research to help them create more suitable and effective advertisements.

The study will test the dependent variables of attention, emotional valence, memory, and attitude. Attention to the advertisements will be measured by obtaining a participant's heart rate. Deceleration of heart rate is indicative of attention to the message. Emotional valence will be measured through facial EMG (measurement of smile and frown muscle activity). Memory will be tested through a recognition test. Attitudes toward the advertisements will be measured through the use of a questionnaire.