

MDIA 220: SPECIAL TOPIC: critical approaches to Advertising

School of English, Film, Theatre, & Media Studies

Trimester 2 2008

22 Points

STAFF

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Office: KP 42-44 Room 112 • **Office Hours:** Weds. 10AM-12PM, or by appointment

CLASS TIMES AND ROOMS

Lectures: Monday 16:00-18:00

Room Number: HM LT105

Tutorials: TBA

COURSE CONTENT

The filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard once described an earlier generation as the children of Marx and Coca-Cola. As a gloss on contemporary culture, this still holds true, although we may well now call them the children of Baudrillard and Red Bull. In a Western culture in which advertising holds a central place in everyday life--from public spaces, to television, popular music, film, and the Internet--it is important that we develop the requisite critical skills that will allow us to engage with advertising texts and contexts as part of our daily routine. This course is designed not to train students in advertising then, but rather to hone the analytical techniques required to make sense of the ways in which advertising affects each and every one of us. To this end, the course will cover the history of advertising, seeing it as a medium which has changed over time, but will focus mainly on the various ways in which it has recently been analysed, theorized and deconstructed.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course, students will be expected to have attained the following:

- An understanding of the role played by advertising in consumer culture.
- An analytical approach to advertising and consumer culture.
- An overview of the different critical approaches and perspectives taken on advertising and consumer culture.

EXPECTED WORKLOAD

Students should be expected to devote 15 hours per week to this course.

READINGS AND SCREENINGS

Readings are available at Student Notes, as a Course Reader. Supplementary readings are available at Closed Reserves at the Library.

A number of books relating to the course have been placed at Closed Reserves. Please check the Library listing for this course for more details.

Two films not shown in class will be screened in MCLT 102, between 1 PM-3 PM on Monday Sept. 1st & 22nd, respectively. If you are unable to attend, the films are also available through the Audio-Visual Centre at the Library. These films are optional, but recommended viewing.

ASSESSMENT

1. First Assignment: 1500 words [30%]

Close reading of an advertisement, using material from first half of class. Students will be expected to demonstrate an analytical approach to their chosen text.

Due Date: THURSDAY, AUGUST 14th, 2 PM

2. Second Assignment: 750 words [30%]

Oral presentation in tutorials, based on a supplementary reading, to be written up as a short report. Presentations will be expected to demonstrate that the student has reflected upon the complex role played by advertising in consumer culture.

Supplementary readings will be placed on Course Reserve.

Students will sign up on Blackboard for their chosen reading.

3. Third Assignment: 2000 words [40%]

Take-home exam. Students will be expected to illustrate the applicability of a select number of approaches and perspectives to advertising introduced in the course.

Distributed Week Eleven

Due Date: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24th, 2 PM

PENALTIES

Late assignments will have 5% per day deducted from the original grade.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students must submit all pieces of assessment in order to pass the course.

Attendance in tutorials is mandatory. Exemptions are allowed for those with proper medical certificate or equivalent.

COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Blackboard will be used throughout this course. Powerpoint presentations will be posted here, *after* the lecture. Questions regarding the course, readings, assignments, etc., should be posted here.

GENERAL ADVICE

The Media Studies Essay Guidelines will be available on Blackboard. These are a useful resource for all students. Please be sure to consult them throughout the trimester.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means no cheating. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. The University defines plagiarism as:

The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one's own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course
- suspension from the course or the University.

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

GENERAL UNIVERSITY STATUTES AND POLICIES

A copy of the General University Statutes and Policies can be found on Blackboard.

COURSE PROGRAMME

Week 1	<u>Introduction to Course: A Short History of Advertising/What is Advertising?</u> Williams, Raymond. "Advertising: The Magic System," in <u>Cultural Studies</u> , Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, Paula A. Treichler, with Linda Baughman, Eds., New York: Routledge, 1992, pp. 410-423.
Week 2	<u>Advertising and Commodity Culture</u> Marx, Karl. "The Fetishism of the Commodity and its Secret," in <u>The Consumer Society Reader</u> , Martyn J. Lee, Ed., New York: Blackwell, 2000, pp. 10-18. Leiss, William, Stephen Kline, and Sut Jhally. "The Bonding of Media and Advertising," in <u>The Consumer Society Reader</u> , Martyn J. Lee, Ed., New York: Blackwell, 2000, pp. 244-52.
Week 3	<u>Reading Ads</u> Barthes, Roland. "Rhetoric of the Image," in <u>The Visual Culture Reader</u> , Nicholas Mirzoeff, Ed., New York: Routledge, 1998, pp. 70-73. Barthes, Roland. "Soap Powders and Detergents," in <u>Mythologies</u> , London: Paladin, 1989, pp. 40-42. Fowles, Jib. "The Dynamics Behind the Advertisement," in <u>Advertising and Popular Culture</u> , Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1996, pp. 77-102.
Week 4	<u>Advertising at Work</u> Thompson, John O. "Advertising's Rationality," in <u>The Media Reader</u> , Manuel Alvarado and John O. Thompson, Eds., London: BFI Publishing, 1990, pp. 208-212. Leiss, William, Stephen Kline, and Sut Jhally. "Criticisms of Advertising," in <u>Social Communication in Advertising: Persons, Products and Images of Well-Being</u> , Auckland: Methuen, 1986, pp. 13-30.
Week 5	<u>Gender, Sexuality and Advertising</u> Brickell, Chris. "Liberation at Levenes? The Brave New (Right) World of the 'Gay Consumer,'" in <u>Sites</u> , No. 36, 1998, pp. 75-89
Week 6	<u>Advertising and Difference</u> Entman, Robert M. and Andrew Rojecki. "Advertising Whiteness," in <u>The Black Image in the White Mind</u> , University of Chicago Press: Chicago and London, 2000, pp. 162-181. Seiter, Ellen. "Different Children, Different Dreams," in <u>Gender, Race and Class in Media: A Text-Reader</u> , Gail Dines and Jean M. Humez, Eds., London: Sage, 1995, pp. 99-108. First assignment due: Thursday, August 14th, 2 PM
Mid Trimester Break	

Week 7

The Sound of Advertising

Booth, Mark W. "Jingle: Pepsi-Cola Hits the Spot," in On Record: Rock, Pop and the Written Word, Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin, Eds., New York: Pantheon, 1990, pp. 320-325.

Taylor, Timothy D. "The Changing Shape of the Culture Industry; or How Did Electronica Music Get Into Television Commercials," in Television and New Media, Vol. 8, No. 3, (August, 2007), pp. 235-258.

Film: Putney Swope (Robert Downey, Sr., 1969)

*MCLT 102 1-3 PM MON

Week 8

Selling Places

Ward, Stephen V. "Come Celebrate Our Dream," in Selling Places, New York: Routledge, 2000, pp. 209-235.

Week 9

The Advertising Look

Wright, Edward, et al. "First Things First, 1964: A Manifesto,"

<http://www.xs4all/~maxb/ftf1964.htm>

Barnbrook, Jonathan, et al. "First Things First, 2000: A Design Manifesto,"

<http://www.xs4all/~maxb/ftf2000.htm>

Soar, Matt. "The First Thing First Manifesto and the Politics of Culture Jamming: Towards a Cultural Economy of Graphic Design and Advertising," in Cultural Studies, Vol. 16, No. 4 (2002), pp. 570-592.

Film: Helvetica (Gary Hustwit, 2007)

*IN-CLASS SCREENING

Week 10

Anti-Advertising

Falk, Pasi. "The Benneton-Toscani Effect: Testing the Limits of Conventional Advertising," in Buy This Book: Studies in Advertising and Consumption, Mica Nava, Andrew Blake, Iain MacRury and Barry Richards, Eds., New York: Routledge, 1997, pp. 64-86.

Film: How to Get Ahead in Advertising (Bruce Robinson, 1989)

*MCLT 102 1-3 PM MON

Week 11

Culture Jamming

Harold, Christine. "Pranking Rhetoric: 'Culture Jamming' as Media Activism," in Critical Studies in Media Communication, Vol. 31, No. 3 (2004), pp. 189-211.

Take-Home Exam Distributed

Week 12

The New Cool

Gladwell, Malcolm. "The Coolhunt," http://www.gladwell.com/1997/1997_03_17_a_cool.htm
(originally published in The New Yorker, March 17, 1997)

Film: Merchants of Cool (Barak Goodman, 2001)

*IN-CLASS SCREENING