

# MDIA 220 SPECIAL TOPIC: Critical Approaches to Advertising

School of English, Film, Theatre, & Media Studies

Trimester 1 2009

22 Points

## STAFF

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## COURSE DELIVERY

Lectures: TUESDAY 13:00-15:00

Trimester Dates: March 3– June 16

Room Number: HM LT105

Tutorials: Held on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Please see S-Cubed to sign up.

## 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 is has recently been analysed, theorized and critiqued.

## LEARNING 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 expect 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, for three-hour loan.

A number of books relating to the course have been placed at Closed Reserve, on three-day loan. 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 WEDNESDAY APRIL 29<sup>th</sup> & WEDNESDAY MAY 20<sup>th</sup>, 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: CLOSE READING 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: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8<sup>th</sup>, 2 PM**

### 2. **Second Assignment: ORAL PRESENTATION + WRITEUP 750 words [30%]**

8-10 minute 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 Closed Reserve.

Students will sign up on Blackboard for their chosen reading.

Write-ups are to be handed by the Friday of the week presented.

### 3. **Third Assignment: TAKE-HOME EXAM 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.

- **NB: This is distributed in Week Eleven**
- **Due Date: MONDAY JUNE 16<sup>th</sup>, 10 AM**

## PENALTIES

Assignments submitted after the deadline without a written extension will be penalised at a rate of 2% (out of a total of 100) per working day. In other words, if you get 50% for an assignment, after one day your grade will drop to 48%, then 46% the following day etc. Late assignments are likely to receive limited feedback. The weekend counts for one day (i.e. an assignment due on Friday that is submitted on Monday will receive a 2% penalty). Please ensure that you are aware of the time that your assignment is due, as well as the date, as this is the cut-off time utilised in calculating lateness penalties.

## EXTENSIONS

Extensions will be granted only in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. Issues of workload do not constitute exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. If you require an extension, you must complete an extension request form (available on your course Blackboard site) prior to the assignment due date. This must be accompanied by relevant documentation (e.g. a doctor's

certificate) where appropriate. Extension requests must be submitted to the Admin Tutor (in MDIA101, 102, 103, and 201), or the Course Co-ordinator (in all other MDIA courses). Tutors cannot grant extensions.

### 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.

All readings are to be done BEFORE class.

### 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 on Blackboard.

### 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 means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such MATERIAL.

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, 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

<b>Week 1</b>	<b><u>Introduction to Course: A Short History of Advertising/What is Advertising?</u></b>  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.
<b>Week 2</b>	<b><u>Advertising and Commodity Culture</u></b>  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.
<b>Week 3</b>	<b><u>Reading Ads</u></b>  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.
<b>Week 4</b>	<b><u>Advertising at Work</u></b>  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.
<b>Week 5</b>	<b><u>Gender, Sexuality and Advertising</u></b>  Brickell, Chris. "Liberation at Levenes? The Brave New (Right) World of the 'Gay Consumer,'" in <u>Sites</u> , No. 36, 1998, pp. 75-89.
<b>Week 6</b>	<b><u>Advertising and Difference</u></b>  Entman, Robert M. and Andrew Rojecki. "Advertising Whiteness," in <u>The Black Image in the White Mind</u> , Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 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.  <b>** First assignment due: Wednesday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2 PM</b>
<b>MID-TRIMESTER BREAK: FRIDAY 10 APRIL- FRIDAY 24 APRIL</b>	

<b>Week 7</b>	<b><u>The Sound of Advertising</u></b>  Booth, Mark W. "Jingle: Pepsi-Cola Hits the Spot," in <u>On Record: Rock, Pop and the Written Word</u> , 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 Commericals," in <u>Television and New Media</u> , Vol. 8, No. 3, (August, 2007), pp. 235-258.  <i>Film: Putney Swope (Robert Downey, Sr., 1969)</i> <i>*MCLT 102 1-3 PM WED</i>
<b>Week 8</b>	<b><u>Selling Places</u></b>  Ward, Stephen V. "Come Celebrate Our Dream," in <u>Selling Places</u> , New York: Routledge, 2000, pp. 209-235.
<b>Week 9</b>	<b><u>The Advertising Look</u></b>  Aynsley, Jeremy. "Style an Ideology: Nazification and Its Contradictions in Graphic Design: 1933-1945," in <u>Graphic Design in Germany 1890-1945</u> , Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000, pp. 178-211.  <i>Film: Helvetica (Gary Hustwit, 2007)</i> <i>*IN-CLASS SCREENING</i>
<b>Week 10</b>	<b><u>Anti-Advertising</u></b>  Falk, Pasi. "The Benneton-Toscani Effect: Testing the Limits of Conventional Advertising," in <u>Buy This Book: Studies in Advertising and Consumption</u> , Mica Nava, Andrew Blake, Iain MacRury and Barry Richards, Eds., New York: Routledge, 1997, pp. 64-86.  <i>Film: How to Get Ahead in Advertising (Bruce Robinson, 1989)</i> <i>*MCLT 102 1-3 PM WED</i>
<b>Week 11</b>	<b><u>Culture Jamming</u></b>  Harold, Christine. "Pranking Rhetoric: 'Culture Jamming' as Media Activism," in <u>Critical Studies in Media Communication</u> , Vol. 31, No. 3 (2004), pp. 189-211.  <b>** Take-Home Exam Distributed</b>
<b>Week 12</b>	<b><u>Branding and Promotional Culture</u></b>  Hearn, Alison. "'Meat, Mask, Burden': Probing the Contours of the Branded 'Self,'" in <u>Journal of Consumer Culture</u> , Vol. 8, No. 2 (2008), pp. 197-217.  <i>Film: Merchants of Cool (Barak Goodman, 2001)</i> <i>*IN-CLASS SCREENING</i>