

# MDIA 220 Special Topic: Critical Approaches to Advertising

**Trimester 1 2011**

28 February to 2 July 2011

20 Points

## TRIMESTER DATES

Teaching dates:	28 February 2011 to 3 June 2011
Mid-trimester break:	18 April to 1 May 2011
Study week:	6 June to 10 June 2011
Last piece of assessment due:	15 June 2011

## WITHDRAWAL DATES

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at  
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

## NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

### Course coordinator and lecturer:

Dr Geoff Stahl [geoff.stahl@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:geoff.stahl@vuw.ac.nz) (04) 463 7472 Room 102, 81 Fairlie Terrace  
*Office hours:* Monday 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon; Tuesday 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.; and by appointment.

**Tutors** will be announced in the first lecture and on the MDIA220 Blackboard site.

## CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

### Lectures

Tuesday 12 PM until 2 PM MC LT 102

### Tutorials

Tutorial details will be announced at the first lecture Tuesday 1 March. Tutorial enrolment will take place after the first lecture through the online S-Cubed system. Further details can be found on the MDIA 220 Blackboard site.

## COURSE DELIVERY

The course will be given in lecture form, with tutorials dedicated to that week's lecture and scheduled readings.

## 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.

## 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 consumer 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 and consumer culture affect each and every one of us. To this end, the course will cover the history of advertising and consumer culture, seeing them as phenomena which have changed over time, but will focus mainly on the various ways in which they have 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 13 hours per week to this course.

## READINGS

**Essential texts:** MDIA 220 Course Reader

**Recommended Reading:** 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.

All undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from the Memorial Theatre foyer from 7 February to 11 March 2011, while postgraduate textbooks and student notes will be available from the top floor of vicbooks in the Student Union Building, Kelburn Campus. After week two of the trimester all undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from vicbooks on Level 3 of the Student Union Building. You can order textbooks and student notes online at [www.vicbooks.co.nz](http://www.vicbooks.co.nz) or can email an order or enquiry to [enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz](mailto:enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz). Books can be couriered to you or they can be picked up from the shop. You will be contacted when they are available.

## ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

- **First Assignment: CLOSE READING: 2000 words [40%]**  
Close reading of an advertisement, using Roland Barthes' essay "Rhetoric of the Image." Students will be expected to demonstrate an analytical approach to their chosen media text.  
**Due Date: FRIDAY, APRIL 8th, 2 PM**
- **Second Assignment: ORAL PRESENTATION + WRITEUP: 500 words [20%]**  
10-12 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 and should be designed to engage with other students in the form of questions and at least one relevant example. Supplementary readings are on Closed Reserve. Students will sign up on S-Cubed for their chosen reading.  
Write-ups are to be handed by the Friday of the week presented.

- **Third Assignment: TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENT: 2000 words [40%]**

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

**Due Date: TUESDAY JUNE 14th, 2 PM**

**NB: This is distributed in Week Twelve**

### ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEETS

Assignment cover sheets and extension forms can be found on Blackboard or outside the Programme office. Remember to fill in your tutor's name.

### PENALTIES AND 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. Tutors cannot grant extensions.

Work submitted after the deadline will be penalised by a 2.5 percent deduction from your total mark per work day. Late work also receives only minimal comments from your marker.

### 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.

### CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

### STATEMENT ON LEGIBILITY

You are expected to present work that meets appropriate standards. Work submitted during the course (i. e. work that is internally assessed) should be typed or prepared on a computer. Work submitted in the final examination will obviously be handwritten. You are expected to write clearly. Where work is deemed 'illegible', you will be given a photocopy of the work and asked to transcribe it to an acceptable standard (preferably typed) within a specified time frame.

### 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>

#### WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study).

Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at

[www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress). Most statutes and policies are available at

[www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy), except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx) (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about\\_victoria/avcademic](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcademic).

**COURSE PROGRAMME**

Week 1	28 FEB	<p><b><u>Introduction to Course: A Short History of Advertising and Consumer Culture</u></b></p> <p>Williams, Raymond. "Advertising: The Magic System." <i>Cultural Studies</i>. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, Paula A. Treichler, with Linda Baughman, Eds., New York: Routledge, 1992. 410-423. Print.</p> <p>Strasser, Susan. "The Alien Past: Consumer Culture in Historical Perspective." <i>The Advertising and Consumer Culture Reader</i>, Joseph Turow and Matthew P. McAllister, Eds. London: Routledge, 2009. 25-37. Print.</p>
Week 2	7 MAR	<p><b><u>Advertising and Commodity Culture</u></b></p> <p>Marx, Karl. "The Fetishism of the Commodity and its Secret." <i>The Consumer Society Reader</i>. Martyn J. Lee, Ed., New York: Blackwell, 2000, pp. 10-18. Print.</p> <p>Leiss, William, Stephen Kline, and Sut Jhally. "The Bonding of Media and Advertising." <i>The Consumer Society Reader</i>. Martyn J. Lee, Ed., New York: Blackwell, 2000. 244-52. Print.</p>
Week 3	14 MAR	<p><b><u>The Culture of Things</u></b></p> <p>Kopytoff, Igor. "The Cultural Biography of Things." <i>The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective</i>. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996. 64-91. Print.</p>
Week 4	21 MAR	<p><b><u>Reading Ads</u></b></p> <p>Barthes, Roland. "Rhetoric of the Image." <i>The Visual Culture Reader</i>. Nicholas Mirzoeff, Ed. New York: Routledge, 1998. 70-73. Print.</p> <p>Barthes, Roland. "Soap Powders and Detergents." <i>Mythologies</i>. London: Paladin, 1989. 40-42. Print.</p>
Week 5	28 MAR	<p><b><u>Advertising at Work</u></b></p> <p>Leiss, William, Stephen Kline, and Sut Jhally. "Criticisms of Advertising." <i>Social Communication in Advertising: Persons, Products and Images of Well-Being</i>. Auckland: Methuen, 1986. 13-30. Print.</p>
Week 6	4 APR	<p><b><u>Gender, Sexuality and Consumer Culture</u></b></p> <p>Brickell, Chris. "Liberation at Levenes? The Brave New (Right) World of the 'Gay Consumer.'" <i>Sites</i>. 36 (1998): 75-89. Print.</p> <p><b>N.B.: First assignment due: FRIDAY, APRIL 8th, 2 PM</b></p>
Week 7	11 APR	<p><b><u>Consumer Culture and Difference</u></b></p> <p>Entman, Robert M. and Andrew Rojecki. "Advertising Whiteness." <i>The Black Image in the White Mind</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000. 162-181. Print.</p> <p>Seiter, Ellen. "Different Children, Different Dreams." <i>Gender, Race and Class in Media: A Text-Reader</i>. Gail Dines and Jean M. Humez, Eds. London: Sage, 1995. 99-108. Print.</p>
<b>Mid Trimester Break:</b>		Monday 18 April– Sunday 1 May 2011
Week 8	2 MAY	<p><b><u>Fashion and Style</u></b></p> <p>Barnard, Malcolm. "Fashion, Clothing, Communication and Culture." <i>Fashion as Communication</i>. London: Routledge, 1996. 25-45. Print.</p>

Week 9	9 MAY	<b><u>Subcultural Style and Consumption: Hipsters</u></b> Arsel, Zeynep and Craig J. Thompson. "Demythologizing Consumption Practices: How Consumers Protect Their Field-Dependent Identity Investments from Devaluing Marketplace Myths." <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i> . 7 (February, 2011). 791-806. Print.
Week 10	16 MAY	<b><u>Boredom and Waiting</u></b> Aho, Kevin. "Simmel on Acceleration, Boredom and Extreme Aesthesia." <i>Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour</i> . 37.4 (2007): 447-462. Print. Gasparini, Giovanni. "On Waiting." <i>Time and Society</i> . 4.1 (1995): 29-45. Print.
Week 11	23 MAY	<b><u>Culture Jamming/Anti-Advertising</u></b> Falk, Pasi. "The Benneton-Toscani Effect: Testing the Limits of Conventional Advertising." <i>Buy This Book: Studies in Advertising and Consumption</i> . Mica Nava, Andrew Blake, Iain MacRury and Barry Richards, Eds., New York: Routledge, 1997. 64-86. Print. Harold, Christine. "Pranking Rhetoric: 'Culture Jamming' as Media Activism." <i>The Advertising and Consumer Culture Reader</i> . Joseph Turow and Matthew P. McAllister, Eds. London: Routledge, 2009. 348-368. Print.
Week 12	30 MAY	<b><u>Branding, Promotional Culture and You™</u></b> Hearn, Alison. "'Meat, Mask, Burden': Probing the Contours of the Branded 'Self.'" <i>Journal of Consumer Culture</i> . 8.2 (2008): 197-217. Print. --. "'Through the Looking Glass': The Promotional University 2.0." <i>Blowing Up the Brand</i> . Melissa Aronczyk and Devon Powers, Eds. New York: Peter Lang, 2010. 197-219. Print. <b>N.B.: Take-Home Assignment Distributed</b>

**Study Week:** Monday 6 June to Friday 10 June 2011

**Take Home Assignment Due: 2 PM TUESDAY 14 JUNE**

**Examination Period:** Friday 10 June to Saturday 2 July 2011