

MDIA 209 Critical Approaches to Advertising and Consumer Culture

Trimester 1 2012

5 March to 4 July 2012

20 Points

TRIMESTER DATES

Teaching dates: 5 March to 8 June 2012

Mid-trimester break: 6 to 22 April 2012

Study week: 11 to 15 June 2012

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

Email: geoff.stahl@vuw.ac.nz

Phone: (04) 463 7472

Office: Room 102, 81 Fairlie Terrace

Office hours: Monday 11.00am – 12.00 noon; Tuesday 2.00pm – 3.00pm; and by appointment.

Tutors will be announced in the first lecture and on the MDIA209 Blackboard site.

CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Lectures

Day and Time: Tuesdays, 10.00am – 11.50am

Room: MC LT102

Tutorials: TBA

Tutorials begin in WEEK 2. Please register for tutorials via the MDIA 209 site on Blackboard: go to “Tutorials” and then follow the instructions under the “SCubed - Tutorial Enrolment Instructions” link. Please read the instructions carefully. Tutorial rooms will be listed on S-Cubed, Blackboard and on the bulletin board outside the SEFTMS Admin Office, 83 Fairlie Terrace.

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. If you are not going to use the Victoria email address set up for you, we strongly encourage you to set a forward from the Victoria email system to the email address you do use.

COURSE PRESCRIPTION

This course is not designed to train students in advertising, but rather to develop the analytical techniques required to make sense of the ways in which advertising and consumer culture affect every one of us. To this end, the course will cover the history of advertising and consumer culture, but will also focus mainly on the various ways in which they have recently been analysed, theorised and critiqued.

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

Students passing the course should be able to:

- Learning Objective 1: Demonstrate an understanding of the role played by advertising in consumer culture.
- Learning Objective 2: Apply analytical approach to advertising and consumer culture.
- Learning Objective 3: Acquire an overview of the different critical approaches and perspectives taken on advertising and consumer culture.

EXPECTED WORKLOAD

The expected workload for a 20 point course is 200 hours over the trimester or 13 week hours per teaching week.

READINGS

Essential texts: MDIA 209 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 13 February to 16 March 2012, 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 4 of the Student Union Building. You can order textbooks and student notes online at www.vicbooks.co.nz or can email an order or enquiry to 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 [30%]**

Close reading of an advertisement, using Roland Barthes' essay "Rhetoric of the Image," and drawing upon any of the other readings set for Week Four. Students will be expected to demonstrate an analytical approach to their chosen media text. (Learning Objective 1)

Due Date: TUESDAY, 24 APRIL, 2.00pm

- **Second Assignment: READING RESPONSES 4 X 500 words [4 X 5%=30%]**

Students will submit four reading responses (of a possible six), engaging with set questions for readings in the Course Reader, with reference to at least one example. These will be handed in at the end of the chosen week's tutorial. (Learning Objectives 1, 2, 3)

Due dates: Between Weeks 6 and 11

- **Third Assignment: TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENT: 2500 words [40%]**

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, basing their response on a set question which will use material drawn from the course readings including those of Week 12. (Learning Objectives 1, 2, 3)

Question Distributed Week 11, in class

Due Date: FRIDAY 8 June, 2.00pm

ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEETS

Assignment cover sheets and extension forms can be found on Blackboard or outside the Programme office, 83 Fairlie Terrace. Remember to fill in your tutor's name.

EXTENSIONS AND PENALTIES

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

To gain a pass in this course you must:

- Submit all the written work specified for this course, on or by the specified dates (subject to such provisions as are stated for late submission of work)
- Attend at least 9 tutorials.

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. Where handwritten work is required you are expected to write clearly. If this 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.

Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress. Most statutes and policies are available at 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 (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/avcacademic.

COURSE PROGRAMME

Week 1	6 MAR	<p><u>Introduction to Course: A Short History of Advertising and Consumer Culture</u></p> <p>Stahl, Geoff. "Advertising: Mapping the 'New and Improved' Mediascape." <i>Being Cultural</i>. Bruce M.Z. Cohen, Ed. Auckland: Pearson, 2011. 229-241. 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	13 MAR	<p><u>Advertising and Commodity Culture</u></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, pp. 244-52. Print.</p>
Week 3	20 MAR	<p><u>The Culture of Things</u></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	27 MAR	<p><u>Reading Ads</u></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> <p>Bonney, Bill and Helen Wilson. "Advertising and the Manufacture of Difference." <i>The Media Reader</i>. Manuel Alvarado and John O. Thompson, Eds. London: BFI, 1990. 181-198.</p> <p>*OPTIONAL READING: Thompson, John O. "Advertising's Rationality." <i>The Media Reader</i>. Manuel Alvarado and John O. Thompson, Eds. London: BFI, 1990. 208-212. Print.</p>
Week 5	3 APR	<p><u>Advertising at Work</u></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>
<p>MID-TRIMESTER BREAK: Friday 6 April to Sunday 22 April 2012</p>		
Week 6	24 APR	<p><u>Gender, Sexuality and Consumer Culture</u></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>N.B.: First assignment due: MONDAY, APRIL 23, 2 PM</p>

Week 7	1 MAY	<p><u>Consumer Culture and Difference</u></p> <p>Crockett, David. "Marketing Blackness: How Advertisers Use Race to Sell Products." <i>Journal of Consumer Culture</i>. 8.2 (2008): 245-268. Print.</p> <p>McClintock, Anne. "Soft-Soaping Empire: Commodity Racism and Imperial Advertising." <i>Media Studies: A Reader</i>. Paul Marris and Sue Thornham, Eds. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999. 751-765. Print.</p>
Week 8	8 MAY	<p><u>Fashion and Style</u></p> <p>Barnard, Malcolm. "Fashion, Clothing, Communication and Culture." <i>Fashion as Communication</i>. London: Routledge, 1996. 25-45. Print.</p>
Week 9	15 MAY	<p><u>Subcultural Style and Consumption: Hipsters</u></p> <p>Greif, Mark. "What Was the Hipster?" New York, 24 October 2010. <http://nymag.com/news/features/69129/>. Web.</p> <p>Stahl, Geoff. "The Mile-End Hipsters and the Unmasking of Montreal's Proletaroid Intelligentsia; or How a Bohemia Becomes Boho." <http://www.adamartgallery.org.nz/admin/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/adamartgallery_vuwsalecture_geoffstahl.pdf>. Web.</p> <p>*OPTIONAL READING: 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.</p>
Week 10	22 MAY	<p><u>Boredom and Waiting</u></p> <p>Aho, Kevin. "Simmel on Acceleration, Boredom and Extreme Aesthesis." <i>Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour</i>. 37.4 (2007): 447-462. Print.</p> <p>Gasparini, Giovanni. "On Waiting." <i>Time and Society</i>. 4.1 (1995): 29-45. Print.</p>
Week 11	29 MAY	<p><u>Culture Jamming/Anti-Advertising</u></p> <p>Falk, Pasi. "The Benneton-Toscana 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>N.B.: Take-Home Assignment Distributed</p>
Week 12	5 JUN	<p><u>Branding, Promotional Culture and You™</u></p> <p>Hearn, Alison. "'Meat, Mask, Burden': Probing the Contours of the Branded 'Self.'" <i>Journal of Consumer Culture</i>. 8.2 (2008): 197-217. Print.</p> <p>--. "'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.</p> <p>*OPTIONAL READING: Anderson, Nicholas and Kim Wheatley. "Self Branding, Service Logic and the Humanities: A New Perspective". <http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org/tne/pieces/self-branding-service-logic-and-humanities-new-zealand-perspective>. Web.</p> <p>N.B. Take-Home Assignment Due Friday, June 8, 2 PM</p>

Study Week: Monday 11 June to Friday 15 June 2012