



**COMM 355: Advertising and Communication**

**4 Units**

Fall Mon/Weds 10:00 – 11:50

**Location: ANN L101**

**Instructor: Rook Campbell, PhD**

**Office Hours: Mon & Weds, 12:00 to 1:00**

**Contact Info: rook.campbell@usc.edu**

**I. Course Description:**

*Advertising and Communication* takes a 360 degree look at the meaning making, social relations, institutions, and products of contemporary advertising. Beginning from the vantage point of *creatives* and advertising practitioners, we will examine ad form and messaging devices. To be able to understand and critique advertising, our semester incorporates text study and opportunities to practice skills of visual culture.

Our aim is to understand the contexts in which messages are developed, produced, and circulated. By approaching advertising as more than a market mechanism, we will debate the social, psychological, political, and legal aspects of this cultural engagement.

By raising important questions of advertising as a space of mediation and dialogue between material goods and society, students will come to understand the day-to-day social, political, and economic edges of advertising. Through debates about advertising, students will obtain practical tools to inform communication strategy, and perhaps even effect social change. We will consider topics of branding, advertising strategy, privacy, political messaging, consumerism, text and image stereotypes, exclusion, racism, gender, as well as mechanisms and implications of audience targeting and segmentation. Our approach is to consider the different meanings of advertising and its regulations. In this way, we will acquire and develop rich resources for communication theorists, ad practitioners, *creatives*, and political activists.

**II. Required Readings:**

Aronczyk, Melissa. 2013. *Branding the Nation: The Global Business of National Identity*. Oxford, New York.

Barthes, Roland. 2001. (1972 ed) *Mythologies*. Harpers Collins, Moosic.

Berger, John. 1990. *Ways of Seeing*. Penguin Books, London.

Molotch, Harvey. 2003. *Where Stuff Comes From: How Toasters, Toilets, Cars, Computers and Many Other Things Come to Be As They Are*. Taylor & Francis, London.

Turow, Joseph. 2013. *The Daily You: How the New Advertising Industry is Defining Your Identity and Your Worth*. Yale University Press, New Haven.

### **III. Recommended Reading:**

Cartwright, Lisa; Sturken, Marita, 2001. *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. Oxford, London.

Leiss, William; Kline, Stephen; Jhally, Sut; Botterill, Jackie. 2005 (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). *Social Communication in Advertising: Consumption in the Mediated Marketplace*. Routledge, New York.

### **IV. Assessment:**

Participation & Exposé	10% of overall mark
Response Papers	20% of overall mark
Practicum Portfolio	15% of overall mark
Midterm (9 October)	25% of overall mark
Final (29 November)	30% of overall mark

### **V. Office Hours:**

I am available to answer your questions and advise you on your work before and briefly after class, as well as during scheduled office hours. To help coordinate your visits, I encourage you to email me to set appointments.

### **VI. Attendance Policy:**

You must participate actively in every discussion section. Attendance is compulsory. I will take attendance in each section. Students arriving more than fifteen minutes late will be considered absent. Students who have obviously not read the assigned material will be considered absent. Excused absences generally require documentation from either a university or medical authority.

### **VII. Readings and Assignments:**

All required readings need to be completed before the section. Please bring a version of the text to class. Come with questions about the readings and be prepared to name difficult, interesting or exciting concepts, terms, or dilemmas that we can discuss together. All assignments must be typed, double spaced and turned in as hardcopies.

### **VIII. Class Policy:**

Because our seminar format emphasizes student interaction, involves debate, and presents case study material, laptop usage is at the discretion of the professor. This policy is to ensure dynamic classroom participation. Please be prepared to take notes the old fashion way. Exceptions for note taking accommodation are possible by request.

### **IX. Course Schedule COMM 355: Reading and Weekly Breakdown\***

**\*Important note to students:** Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change – and probably will adjust – based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.

**Week One: 21 & 23 August**  
**Introduction: Commercial Art and Culture**

**Week Two: 28 & 30 August**  
**Symbol Systems and Visual Culture**

**Week Three: 6 September**  
**Culture, Commodity & Status**

-- Response Paper No. 1 | 6 September --

**Week Four: 11 & 13 September**  
**Advertising for the 'Youth' Market: Sport, Culture, Lifestyle**

**Week Five: 18 & 20 September**  
**Cultural Stage and Mega Audience Advertising**  
-- Practicum No. 1 | 20 September --  
-- Guest | 20 September

**Week Six: 25 & 27 September**  
**Productions and Circulation of Desired Things**

**Week Seven: 2 & 4 October**  
**Selling Form, Function & Desire**

-- Response Paper No. 2 | 4 October --

----- Midterm   9 October -----
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**Week Eight: 9 & 11 October**  
**Alternative, Subversive, & Resistant Messaging**  
-- Midterm | 9 October --  
-- Documentary | 11 October --

**Week Nine: 16 & 18 October**  
**Regulated Messages: Dangerous Goods, Services & Stereotypes**

**Week Ten: 23 & 25 October**  
**Advertising, Audience & Space**  
-- Guest | 23 October --

**Week Eleven: 30 October & 1 November**  
**Selling Place: Putting the Local in the Global**

-- Guest, LAFC | 1 November --  
-- Practicum No. 2 | 1 November --

**Week Twelve: 6 & 8 November**

**Profits and Social Do-Gooding**

-- Research Abstract Due | 6 November --  
-- Important Research Workshop | 8 November --

**Week Thirteen: 13 & 15 November**

**Advertising in a Digital Age: Technologies and Freedoms**

-- Documentary | 13 November --  
-- Practicum No. 3 | Class Debate, 15 November --

**Week Fourteen: 20 November**

-- Writing Workshop | 20 November --

**Week Fifteen: 27 & 29 November**

**Assessing Advertising: Money, Meaning & Messaging**

-- Final Projects | 29 November --

**XI. Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

**Academic Conduct**

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/departement-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage [sarc@usc.edu](mailto:sarc@usc.edu) describes reporting options and other resources.

**Support Systems**

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the

*American Language Institute* <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* [http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\\_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html) provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.