

COMM 455: ADVERTISING AND SOCIETY
Fall 2010 / MW 12-1:50pm / ASC G34

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Course Description

In this course, we will examine the role of advertising in contemporary society as an economic force and a cultural form of representation. We will focus on the historical and institutional contexts in which advertising has evolved and exists today as a central aspect of consumer society. This will involve looking at social structures, economic conditions, media institutions, and governmental regulations. We will become familiar with many of the theoretical tools that help us to understand the content and communicational impact of advertisements and commodities. We will examine the ways in which advertising and consumption are enlisted in processes of cultural representation and identity construction. Finally, we will consider some of the social responses to advertising and consumption, including anti-consumption movements.

Course Requirements

You are required to attend all class sessions, complete all assigned readings, and to actively participate in both in-class and online discussions. There will also be a variety of course assignments:

Blogs (30%): Each student is required to keep a blog in which they respond to assigned readings and apply course concepts to their own observations of advertising. Prompts for each blog post will be provided by the instructor on a bi-weekly basis. On weeks when there is no prompt assigned, students will read the blogs of other students in their assigned group and make thoughtful commentary on their classmates' blogs. The cumulative grade for this assignment will be based on the quality of the student's own posts as well as the quality of participation in the group online discussion. Students may be asked to evaluate the participation of their fellow group-members at the end of the term.

Exams (40%): There will be two mid-term exams (short essay format).

Paper (20%): Students will write a final essay (6-8 pages), to be turned in at the final exam meeting time.

Attendance and in-class participation make up the remaining 10% of your course grade. Unexcused absences and in-class distractedness (e.g. web surfing, chatting, texting, etc.) will result in a reduced grade!

Required Texts

Leiss, William, et al. 2005. *Social communication in advertising*. 3rd Edition. New York: Taylor & Francis.

Additional required articles will be posted as PDFs to the course Blackboard site.

Course Policies

Late submissions – including blog posts – will *NOT* be accepted. All deadlines are firm. If you are aware of a conflict that will prevent you from completing an assignment on time, you are responsible to contact the instructors *in advance*. Emergencies will require written documentation.

Laptops are allowed for note-taking and research purposes in class. Please don't let yourself get distracted by other things on your computer!

Academic integrity is *crucial* in this course. Particularly because you will be posting writings to the web, it is very important that you adequately credit the sources of the ideas you present. It is proper “netiquette” to provide links to any web material you reference. It is also standard academic practice to cite any sources you utilize in producing your own scholarship.

You are expected only to submit work that is 1) your own and 2) done expressly for this course. This means, don't submit work you have prepared for another course, or work you have found on the Internet or elsewhere. Doing so will result in a zero grade on the assignment, and possible failure of the course or expulsion from the school.

The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University's Academic Integrity Code as detailed in the *SCampus* guide. It is the policy of the School of Communication to report all violations of the code. Any serious violations or pattern of violations of the Academic Integrity Code will result in the student's expulsion from the Communication major or minor. The University presumes that you are familiar with its standards and policies. Should you be found to have committed a violation, ignorance of these standards and policies will not be accepted as an excuse. For further clarification, please refer to “University Student Conduct Code” and “Appendix A: Academic Dishonesty Sanction Guidelines” in the *SCampus* guide.

ADA Compliance Statement

Any student requesting academic accommodation based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to your instructor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Course Schedule

- 8/23: Course Introduction
- 8/26: History of Consumer Society I
SCA Ch. 1: "Introduction"
SCA Ch. 2: "From Traditional to Industrial Society"
- 8/30: History of Consumer Society II
Michael Schudson, "Historical Roots of Consumer Culture"
SCA Ch. 3: "Advertising in the Transition from Industrial to Consumer Society"
- 9/1: History of Consumer Society III
SCA Ch. 9: "Late Modern Consumer Society"
SCA Ch. 8: "Consumer Cultures and Mediated Markets"
Blog Post #1 due at noon
- 9/6: No class (Labor Day)
- 9/8: Advertising and Mass Media
SCA Ch. 4: "Advertising and the Development of Communications Media"
SCA Ch. 10: "Media in the Mediated Marketplace"
Comment Round #1 due at noon
- 9/13: Advertising Beyond the Mass Media
Mark Andrejevic, "Productive Play 2.0: The Logic of In-Game Advertising"
Other readings TBA
- 9/15: Institutions of Advertising
SCA Ch. 5: "Advertising and the Development of Agencies"
SCA Ch. 11: "Full Service Agencies"
Blog Post #2 due at noon
- 9/20: Consumer Politics
SCA Ch. 17: "Issues in Social Policy"
Lizabeth Cohen, "Politics: Purchasers Politicized"
- 9/22: Pro-social Advertising
Readings TBA
Comment Round #2 due at noon
- 9/27: Exam #1

- 9/29: Advertising Form
SCA Ch. 6: "The Structure of Advertisements"
SCA Ch. 14: "Negotiated Messaging for Generation X"
Blog Post #3 due at noon
- 10/4: Analysing Meaning in Ads
Roland Barthes, "The Rhetoric of the Image"
Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, "Viewers Make Meaning"
- 10/6: Commodities and Communication I
SCA Ch. 7: "Goods as Communicators and Satisfiers"
Néstor García Canclini, "Consumption is Good for Thinking"
Comment Round #3 due at noon
- 10/11: Commodities and Communication II
Karl Marx, "The Fetishism of Commodities"
Thorstein Veblen, "Conspicuous Consumption"
- 10/13: Lifestyle and Status
Pierre Bourdieu, Introduction to *Distinction*
SCA Ch. 15: "Mobilizing the Cultural"
- Blog Post #4 due at noon
- 10/18: Advertising and Social Identity
Joseph Turow, excerpts from *Breaking Up America: Advertising and the New Media World*
- 10/20: Advertising and Race and Ethnicity I
Arlene Dávila, excerpts from *Latinos, Inc.: The Marketing and Making of a People*
Comment Round #4 due at noon
- 10/25: Advertising and Race and Ethnicity II
Anne McClintock, "Soft-Soaping Empire: Commodity Racism and Imperial Advertising"
Bell hooks, "Eating the Other"
- 10/27: Advertising and Gender I
Michael A. Messner & Jeffrey Montez de Oca, "The Male Consumer as Loser"
Susan Bordo, "Hunger as Ideology"
Blog Post #5 due at noon
- 11/1: Advertising and Gender II
Richard Goldman, Deborah Heath, & Sharon L. Smith, "Commodity Feminism"
Josée Johnston and Judith Taylor, "Feminist Consumerism and Fat Activists: A Comparative Study of Grassroots Activism and the Dove Real Beauty Campaign"

- 11/3: Advertising and Sexual Minorities
Larry Gross, "A Niche of Our Own"
Katherine Sender, "Selling Sexual Subjectivities"
Comment Round #5 due at noon
- 11/8: Exam #2
- 11/10: The Youth Market
SCA Ch. 13: "The Mobilization of the Yuppies and Generation X"
Naomi Klein, "Alt.Everything: The Youth Market and the Marketing of Cool"
- 11/15: Anti-establishment Advertising
Thomas Frank, "Advertising as Cultural Criticism"
Thomas Frank, "The Varieties of Hip: Advertisements of the 1960s"
Blog Post #6 due at noon
- 11/17: The Commodification of Rebellion
Thomas Frank, "Why Johnny Can't Dissent"
Naomi Klein, "Patriarchy Gets Funky"
Comment Round #6 due at noon
- 11/22: Culture Jamming
Naomi Klein, "Culture Jamming: Ads Under Attack"
Andrew Boyd, "Truth is A Virus: Meme Warfare and the Billionaires for Bush (or Gore)"
- 11/24: Blog Post #7 due at noon
No class (Thanksgiving)
- 11/29: Anti-Consumption
Jonathan Dee, "Reverend Billy's Unholy War"
Juliet Schor, "Holiday Buying: Just Don't"
Steven Kurutz, "Not Buying It"
Jake Halpern, "The Freegan Establishment"
Erika Hayasaki, "Free-Lunch Foragers"
Final Paper assignment distributed
- 12/1: Ethical Consumption
Jo Littler, "Sanctimonious Shopping? Ethical Consumption as a 'Crisis of Moralism'"
Jo Littler, "Cosmopolitan Caring: Globalization, Charity and the Activist Consumer"
Derrick Jensen, "Forget Shorter Showers: Why Personal Change Does Not Equal Political Change"
Comment Round #7 due at noon
- 12/10: Final Paper Due, 11am