

CMGT 506
Images and Image Management
Fall, 2016
W 6:30-9:20

“The making of the illusions which flood our experience has become the business of America, some of its most honest and most necessary and most respectable business.”

Daniel J. Boorstin
The Image

“This would be the successive phases of the image:

- it is a reflection of a basic reality
- it masks and perverts a basic reality
- it masks the *absence* of a basic reality
- it bears no relation to any reality whatever:
 it is its own pure simulacrum.”

Jean Baudrillard
Simulations

“Class understatement describes the technique: if your money and freedom and carelessness of censure allow you to buy any kind of car, you provide yourself with the meanest and most common to indicate that you’re not taking seriously so easily purchasable and thus vulgar a class totem.”

“If the function of the middle class housewife’s plaque is to assure her that her drudgery has value, the function of these plaques is to assert that God loves proles, which He doubtless does, although there seems no reason for constantly harping on it.”

Paul Fussell
Class

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Course Overview: Image management is a relatively contemporary concern. Concerns with images and image management grew with the rise of communication technologies. From still photography and motion pictures in the late nineteenth century to the seemingly endless array of communication technologies that today bombard us with text and images, the concept of image has changed radically over the last century.

It is impossible to engage in today’s culture without constantly interacting with images and imagery. Our lives depend on the unending variety of images that surround us. And, as some of the authors we will read this semester tell us, at some point, the image

becomes our reality. As the image takes on greater reality, it shapes our society and beliefs.

This course examines images and image management as tools for the creation and dissemination of information, for creating social change, and for modifying the behavior of others. While many studies in the field focus almost solely on image management in politics, we will examine the role of image in most of its manifestations in our culture, politics, business, publicity, advertising, entertainment, fashion, and sports.

In order to examine this important subject, we will read and discuss the most important works written on the subject over the last century. This course is heavily weighted toward reading and discussing material.

We will often start class by identifying a particular celebrity, corporation, or other image driven subject and examining that subject as we attempt to apply concepts of image management to real life image machinery. Some days I will identify a subject we will pursue. Other class periods, I will expect you to identify a subject for class discussion.

A note on computer use: Often, professors discourage online computer use in the classroom. In this class we will count it as essential. While I may use the class facilities to identify and “chase” a particular subject through the Internet, I will also want you engaging in the same chase (and, perhaps, finding images and image issues I miss). So, we will likely all be working with our computers through the semester. Though, this does not give you the excuse to facebook in class, which will lead to immediate censure and will impact your participation grade.

Required Reading:

Barthes, Roland. Camera Lucida. New York: Hill and Wang 2010.

Baudrillard, Jean. Simulations. USA: Semiotext [e] 1983.

Boorstin, Daniel J. The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America. New York: Random House Publishers 1987.

Fussell, Paul. Class: A Guide Through the American Status System. New York: Touchstone 1992.

Lippmann, Walter. Public Opinion. New York: Create Space 2013.

Recommended Readings:

Barthes, Roland. Mythologies. New York: Hill and Wang 1982.

James, Clive. Fame in the Twentieth Century. New York: Random House 1993.

Assignments: You will be required to present a summation and application of key concepts in class to a particular field of interest, the field or business you work in or hope to work in. We will take a class period near the end of the semester for presentations on image management. After having examined the importance of image throughout culture, our discussion should be greatly enriched by your use of these ideas to examine a particular field. Your final exam will pursue questions posed at the end of this syllabus. We will spend the final exam period discussing your exam answers.

Grade Percentage:

Participation-----	20
Paper-----	25
Presentation-----	25
Final Exam-----	<u>30</u>
Total	100

Disabilities Services: "Any student requesting academic accommodations 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. Be sure the letter is delivered to me 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. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776."

Academic Integrity: 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.

Reading and Assignment Due Dates and Discussion Topics

As always, this is tentative and subject to change as the semester progresses.

8/24 Course Introduction

We will discuss the course, its goals, topics, assignments, future discussion topics, and readings. You know the routine. You will also be assigned the task of developing a personal brand. More on this in class.

8/31 The Evolution of Celebrity, Image, and Pseudo-Events

I will give a brief overview of how the discussion of “image” evolved in communication and rhetorical theory. This material may or may not be familiar to many of you.

However, I realize a number of students in the Communication Management program did not get their undergraduate degrees in communication studies. So, we will take some time to make certain everyone has the same definitions for terms (or, at least, a relatively close agreement). We will then discuss Boorstin’s basic concepts on image and society. Boorstin traces the development of image and celebrity from the explosion of media and the correlated explosion in the need for material to fit those media. News became news because it was printed in newspapers, not because it was particularly newsworthy.

Celebrities became celebrities because they were well-known. Or, as Boorstin puts it, they were known for their well-knownness. This circular irony creates a culture in which the image of fame is fame itself, in which the image, the form, can become the reality.

Required Readings: Boorstin Introduction-Ch.1, pp. 3-77.

9/7 Film, War, and the Evolution of Image

Walter Lippmann wrote the first classic study of public opinion and the role of image, stereotypes, and perception. One cannot overestimate the importance of film and the propaganda of World War I in creating the environment that led to the first social critical studies of image and how image creates a “reality” that can shape beliefs, actions, and perceptions. Because of its importance, we will start this class period by watching a documentary on World War I film propaganda. We will then discuss Lippmann’s response and the understanding he developed of ideas, stereotypes, and how those shape our understanding of the world. *Required Reading:* Lippmann chs. 1-10, pp. 2-100.

9/14 Early Notions of Image and its Use

Lippmann offered a now dated set of ideas concerning how image could be shaped to impact and, from his point of view, better the social order. These ideas continue to interest because they allow us to see an early critical understanding of how image/stereotypes/personal interests can be used to modify the public will. *Required Readings:* Lippmann, chs. 11-15, pp. 101-158.

9/21 Fame---And I mean FAME

Back in the day, I used to have students read Clive James wildly entertaining book “Fame in the 20th Century.” Not only was the book a whale of a lot of fun to read, it also offered some valuable insights into the culture of fame. Unfortunately, the book has long been out of print. Fortunately, for us, I happen to have the complete DVD set of original videos on which the book was based. This evening, we will watch two of those videos (in lieu of reading James’s nearly impossible to get book) and discuss what those videos teach us about the nature of fame in a media-saturated environment.

9/28 Pseudo-Events, Pseudo-People, Pseudo-Lives, Image and Expectations; Travel, Tourism, and the Image of Place

As we return to Boorstin, we can see that much of his work, like elements in Lippmann, centers on examining the ways in which images create expectations in the public mind. Thus, we move from a culture that embraced “heroes” to a culture that embraces “celebrity,” from a culture that idealized travel as adventure and hardship to a culture that creates expected images of locations and demands that those images be realized no matter how they may falsify the local environment. In other words, we create expectations in the images we apply to people, places, and things and then expect those images to hold true of the actual people, places, and things. This expectation becomes a demand of celebrities, locations, and other “ideals.” *Required Readings:* Boorstin, ch. 2, pp. 45-76.

10/5 Travel, Tourism, and the Image of Place

“The Happiest Place on Earth,” “What Happens Here, Stays Here,” “The Island of Aloha,” “The Land of Ahs.” When travel moves from adventure to tourism, it moves from the “reality” of place to the image of pseudo-place. The image creates a fiction that becomes an expectation. Hawaii is no longer a place where Hawaiian culture dominates, it evolves into a Disneyland or Las Vegas in which “Hawaiian” shows entertain and make us think we are seeing something important. Yet, these shows could just as well appear on our televisions and, in fact, the entire environment of place becomes a kind of television show in which creating, manipulating, and selling an image creates the audience, sales, and meaning of the place. *Required Readings:* Boorstin, ch. 3, pp. 77-116.

10/12 Image and Mass Media: Film

Both Boorstin and Clive James link the rise of film as a medium and the rise of image as a force in creating celebrity and fame. We will return to the medium of film for a perceptive analysis of image and fraud later in the semester. For now, we want to examine how images created through a most fundamental illusion create realities that ground the impressions of so much of our culture. *Required Readings:* Boorstin, ch. 4, pp. 118-180.

10/19 Image, Status, and the Marketplace

We finish our discussion of Boorstin with an examination of the role of image in creating class, status, and our sense of prestige. We will expand this discussion as we work through Fussell's brilliant analysis of American culture, image and class. Boorstin is especially concerned with how advertising and advertisers can exploit the expectations image carries among consumers. *Required Reading:* Boorstin, chs. 5-6, pp. 181-262.

10/26 Image, Class, and Social Expectation

Paul Fussell's study of class and status in America is both a classic social analysis and one of the funniest books you are likely to read. He offers a brilliant analysis of the various classes that ground American culture, the images each seeks to project and the buying habits this engenders. As we examine more closely the role of advertising, mass media, and marketers in creating and massaging image and image management in America, Fussell gives us many fascinating (and witty) insights into how the various images appeal and create their own audience. As we discuss the various classes Fussell identifies, we will see how our *expectations* fit into the roles class image creates for us. We will also discuss the single most important truth in Fussell's work (a notion that was expounded in a completely different context by social historian Richard Hofstadter). That idea is that the most compelling sell point for personal status is not raising in class or status but the fear of falling to a lower social class. *Required Reading:* Fussell, chs. 1-9, pp. 1-223.

11/2 Image, Fame, Celebrity, Status

Before your class presentations, we will try to wrap up some key thoughts about the role of image in society, publicity, and marketing. All of these points converge in creating the world we experience and the attitudes and consuming activities we carry on in that world. Baudrillard offers some wildly inventive ways of understanding how we reconstruct our entire world through image. He asserts that we create simulations of the world, essentially complete reconstructions of the world according to the image(s) we bring to it, and make our world according to that image. A fascinating point of view to examine as we move from discussing to applying image analysis to real world campaigns. *Required Reading:* Baudrillard, pp. 1-73.

11/9 Image Analysis

During this class period, you will present your analysis of image and image management in a specific corporate or political setting. The goal of this assignment is to get you to draw on class concepts to examine your corporation or industry, creating a critical analysis of the role and use of image and image management. You and a partner will develop a ten-minute discussion with illustrations of image management in your chosen industry. You will be expected to apply concepts especially from Boorstin, Baudrillard

(who we will at least preview the preceding week), and Fussell (and/or Lippmann if you are focusing on a news or political organization).

11/16 Image Analysis Presentations Continued

We will also conclude discussions of Baudrillard, Boorstin, Fussell, and Lippmann.

11/23 Thanksgiving Break---all classes at USC cancelled.

11/30 Image, the Image, Fraud, Art, and Technology

We're saving the best for last. In the early 1970s, Orson Welles produced a brilliant essay on film that examined the distinction between mediated image and reality, fraud and "truth." We will watch this filmed essay during the first half of class (bring popcorn). We will discuss the implications of these ideas and of ideas presented in Roland Barthes' brief reflection on technology and image creation, *Camera Lucida*. At the end of the semester, we come full circle, discussing one of the key theorists who set us on our way the first night. Barthes, who developed one of the key semiotic approaches to understanding images in the twentieth century, rethought his ideas at the end of his life as he tried to distinguish between the mother he knew and loved and the image of his mother created by the pseudo-realist technology of photography. In doing this, he rethinks much of what we have discussed throughout the semester and leaves us with new avenues to consider in studying the interrelationship between image, technology, media, and culture. A fitting summation to our semester. *Required Reading:* Barthes, pp. 1-119.

12/7 Final Exam

Your final exam will have a written and a spoken element. The primary exam will be take home. You will be given four questions from which you will choose three to answer. These questions will apply class concepts to real world image management. During our final exam period, you will be asked to discuss at least one of your answers as we conclude our summer course with a final discussion of image and its uses.

CMGT 506

Image and Branding Portfolio

Due 11/30

Your class assignments are interrelated. They are built to work together so that you develop a complete analysis and application of class concepts to a real world subject.

You are to develop a class presentation on image analysis in a particular field. Your class writing assignment needs to focus more particularly on a *single corporation, celebrity, politician, or other subject of image management* within the field you cover in your class presentation. Your examination should focus on the specific image campaign being employed to create a brand image for the subject.

You are to develop a research portfolio and proposal in which you examine the image machinery around a specific person, place, or corporation. You are to write a fifteen-page paper that critically assesses the various image activities being put forward to shape the public image of your subject. Your analysis **must** include a discussion of the various media employed in the image construction. You must discuss all uses of the Internet (including, but not excluded to, uses of web sites, pages, Facebook, Twitter, youtube, and all other online media used to shape the image---you also need to examine the use of online press releases to online news sources, and any other uses the image makers employ). Of course, you cannot limit your discussion to the Internet. You are to examine and assess the representation of the subject across all media, in personal appearances, pseudo-events, and all other public representations.

Your analysis should draw on class theory to examine this campaign. What image(s) (and, images, of course, don't simply mean visual representations; they include terms catchphrases, etc.) have been created to promote this celebrity/organization/movement? How have the image managers made the images reproducible (how have they induced others to reproduce the image, how have they made it a part of popular discourse---remember, the point is not to say it; the point is to get the public to say it, over and over and over, to get the public, of its own accord, to reproduce the image)? What pseudo-events have the image managers used to generate public knowledge of and interest in the image (and to reinforce the values they identify with the image)? Read through your notes. There are quite a number of other key ideas you can draw on for your analysis.

I would expect you to have a minimum of ten sources for this paper (I would think it likely Boorstin would be one, though, you may, of course, use any other class texts that help you explain and use theory). The other sources should offer information on the campaign you are examining. You should also seek any academic papers or articles that might have been written on your campaign. Of course, there is typically a direct correlation between the quality of the sources you use and the quality of your analysis. Sources directly related to the campaign, major media sources, and academic sources are likely to give you the best information.

The first ten pages of your paper should be a straightforward analysis of the image campaign and branding drawing on all available sources. The final third of your paper needs to be a proposal for new and/or improved image branding. Beyond identifying underused strategies, this section must identify at least one new media outlet not being employed in the current image campaign, explain the value and use of this outlet, and offer specific strategies for constructing the subject's image on this outlet. Your portfolio should include visual and (if appropriate) auditory illustrations of the suggested image construction. These images and illustrations may be included as appendices at the end of the paper. But, they *must* be included.

So, if you suggested that the "celebrity" develop a facebook page, you should construct an illustration of a front page, print it, and place it at the end of your paper. If you suggest putting the subject on Twitter, develop a strategic plan for when the subject publishes on Twitter, the content, the types of messages that will be especially reproducible (catchphrases, types of "inside information" being presented, and so on).

You have the entire semester to develop your research. Pick a subject asap, let me know what it is, and get to looking up the subject online. To make this as enjoyable as possible, pick a subject you really love, something/someone with which/whom you are fascinated. If you have to do research, anyway, do it about something you love to study (I don't care how goofy you think your subject is for this assignment, let me know about it and I will almost certainly tell you to go for it---with a few suggestions if it does seem problematic).

Good luck and bring any questions to me.

CMGT 506
Image Class Presentation
Due 11/9

You are to produce a ten-minute (AND NO LONGER THAN TEN MINUTES---I will stop you at 12 minutes and you will be assessed for any part of your presentation that you have missed) presentation that offers a brief, entertaining, and enlightening analysis of image management in your field. The presentation should be more general in nature than your paper and should offer several simple and clear illustrations of image manipulation in your field. The presentation should be powerpoint based, have a significant number of visual aids or illustrations (preferably incorporated into the powerpoint), and be damned fun to watch. Remember, you are an image manager. Give us the image of a professional, entertaining, fun to watch seminar speaker.

You should explain the primary image managing activities companies and individuals must engage in to succeed in your field. How is image created in your field? What sorts of images are popular or dominate the field? What simple and direct value ascriptions do these images create?

Your analysis should draw on the key ideas we've discussed in class. You should examine the images as produce, a product developed solely for consumption by a given audience. You should discuss the ways in which the image managers try to create and manipulate an image that appeals to a target audience, an image that offers the audience a representation of itself as it would like to be, an image that is easily reproducible and stands up to continual reproduction. You should also identify the target audience of these image managers and indicate how they go about creating images that appeal to that particular audience.

You may want to distinguish between "ideals" in the field and the inviting images that image managers create, images that are non-threatening, engaging, and consumable. You should have several illustrations of various image makers in your field (do not focus on one alone for this assignment---give us an overview with clear, concrete illustrations).

Remember, you don't need to focus on celebrities (though you certainly can). You can analyze how, say, health care corporations manipulates their image (e.g., How has Kaiser tried to recreate its image after the recent problems with its hospitals?). Or, you can look at how restaurant chains respond to negative brand images constructed by others (e.g., How has McDonalds changed its image since "Super Size Me?"). You can examine how the image of a place or destination is manipulated (How do the political officials in, say, Cancun create an atmosphere of "otherness" that is still invitingly "homey" for tourists? How are the owners of Knott's Berry Farm attempting to modify its image? How has the image of Vegas been reshaped over the years?). Some image discussions may seem a mixture of place, corporation, and individual (How has the return of the Rams impacted the LA brand? Why are the Olympics such an important brand for Los Angeles, Garcetti, etc, to pursue?).

As noted, your presentation should include a powerpoint of key ideas, images, terms, and activities. Make the powerpoint bright, simple, entertaining, and clear. Drop in as many pictures, video, and other illustrations as the time can hold. The key here is to illustrate, to show, not simply tell.

Dig deeply in your research. This will be far more fun for you if you go past a general overview and really dig into the activities of particular groups, celebrities, or corporate or political bodies. It may well make you a bit more cynical (reinforcing, as it will, the fact that the largest portion of corporate activity today typically involves creating a fictional image). But, the deeper you dig, the more fun you should have in this assignment. If you don't enjoy this assignment, you are doing something wrong.

Have fun and let me know if you have any questions.