

Advertising and Consumer Culture
COMM 281

Professor Jeremy Sarachan
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Office: Fay 210

Office Hours:

Mondays: Noon-1pm (in Fay 210),

Thursday: 11:30-12:30 (on Zoom-see Bb)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

In Advertising and Consumer Culture, advertisements are studied as a dominant influence on both our consumption of products and the definition of our wants and desires. This class will take both a critical and practical look at the advertising industry. Students will consider the commodification of culture and apply techniques of visual analysis to the understanding of advertising messages. They will critique the role of new technologies in the personalization and growing immersive quality of ads. Students also will study segmentation and targeting of audiences, consumer choice and behavioral economics, media planning and buying, and the creative process (including the role of graphic design and video production in ad creation)

The course will be a combination of lecture/discussion and small group projects. The course will examine advertising in American society, including its role in promoting capitalism and materialism. We will also consider what constitutes effective advertising from the view of psychology and behavioral economics. Students will develop foundational skills in produced image-based and video advertisements.

Advertising and Consumer Culture is required for majors in Media Management. It counts as an elective in the Media and Communication major and minor.

3 Credits

No Prerequisites

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Study the history of the advertising industry.
- Complete a semiotic analysis of advertisements.
- Consider the role of ideology in the formation and success of advertising.
- Discuss media representation and diversity in relation to advertising.
- Become knowledgeable about principles of effective advertising.
- Learn techniques of design and video production sufficient to produce basic advertisements.
- Explore about the roles in the advertising industry.
- Develop techniques in media buying.
- Learn about the changes in ads resulting from the rise of social media.
- Work in groups to create a campaign around a social issue.

Program Goals for Media Management

- 1a. Students will evaluate media history from cultural, technological, and economic perspectives.
- 1c. Students will produce and analyze professional quality products (e.g., press kits, ads, media campaigns) that address client needs.
- 2a. Students will analyze ethical decision making in the media industry as it reflects issues of race, class, global cultures, and/or gender.

Assignment	Points	Goals
Exam 1	150	1a, 2a
Exam 2	150	1a, 2a
Exam 3	100	1a, 2a
Semiotic Ad Analysis	50	
Text Ad	50	1c
Media Buying Exercise	50	
Resistance Exercise	50	
Final Project	200	1c
“Persuasion” Presentation	100	
Participation	100	
TOTAL	1000	

Grade Computation Chart

A	930-1000	C	730-769
A-	900-929	C-	700-729
B+	870-899	D+	670-699
B	830-869	D	630-669
B-	800-829	D-	600-629
C+	770-799	F	0-599

Please see Blackboard for the daily schedule and assignment details.

Required Texts.

- Holm, Nicholas. *Advertising and Consumer Culture*. Palgrave. ISBN: 978-1-137-47174-1.
- Van Leeuwen & Van Baaren. *Hidden Persuasion*. BisPublishers. ISBN: 978-90-6369-531-6.
- Harvard Business Publishing Coursepack for COMM 281. \$57.87.

Attendance Policy

- You will lose 75 points from your total grade out of 1000 after three unexcused (3) absences, and then 25 additional points for each unexcused absence after that. After eight unexcused (8) absences, you will receive an FA for the class.
- Illness and other situations (e.g., jury duty). should be discussed with the professor. Do not come to class sick. Communication is the key to this policy. (Don't just skip class.)
- It is your responsibility to first contact another student (or the professor as necessary) to find out what you have missed and make arrangements to make-up work.
- Absences do not alter your responsibility to hand in assignments on time. (In cases when this is impossible, you must contact the instructor ahead of time.)
- If you will be unable to fulfill requirements, it is your responsibility to drop the class. You may drop the class with no record on your transcript until Monday, October 4.

Classroom Expectations:

All students should strive to be fully committed to be fully engaged in the lectures and discussions that take place. You are expected to:

- Actively participate in all class activities.
- Volunteer contributions on a regular basis.
- Arrive to class on time. Bathroom breaks should be kept to a minimum, and should be taken silently and without class interruption.
- Respect the professor and other students, especially during student presentations.

Also...

- Students should not be using their computers for e-mail, checking social media or pursuing other activities not related to class. Students may use computers for note taking.
- Students should not be texting. (Personal issues are certainly a part of life. An emergency text requires that a student step out of class to handle such an emergency. Such occurrences should be rare.)
- The instructor reserves the right to require that a student leave who is causing a disruption in class. This includes failure to wear a mask as required by current college policy.
- Grades will be posted on Blackboard within a week of submission. Please monitor your grades regularly.
- Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. Late assignments will lose 15% of their value for each class period late. (It is late if not handed in at the start of class.) Assignments more than a week late will NOT be accepted. *The take-home exam will NOT be accepted late. The semester ends during the final exam period when presentations will be given and nothing will be accepted after that.*
- The method for submitting assignments will be included with the assignment. No physical copies will be accepted.
- Lost assignments are never a valid excuse for a late submission. Careful handling of files and rigorous backup procedures should be followed.

College Policy Concerning Students with Disabilities

St. John Fisher College has a continuing commitment to providing reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students with disabilities who may need some accommodation in order to fully participate in this class are urged to contact the Student Accessibility Services Office, as soon as possible, to explore what arrangements need to be made to assure access. The Student Accessibility Services Office (Kearney 300) can be reached by phone (585-385-5252) and email (sas@sjfc.edu). Additional information can be found at <https://www.sjfc.edu/student-life/student-accessibility-services/>.

Professor Sarachan's addendum: Please speak to me about anything I can do to help your ability to learn and be successful in class. Individuals learn differently and some methods of teaching can be more or less effective for different people. I'd like to hear about and discuss what I can do to help you achieve success, whether or not this is related to a documented issue.

Statement on Academic Integrity

All students, regardless of level or school, are responsible for following the St. John Fisher College Academic Integrity Policy in addition to any other individual school's or program's academic expectations and/or professional standards. Every student is expected to demonstrate academic integrity in all academic pursuits at all times. If a student suspects that another student has violated the Academic Integrity Policy, he or she should contact the instructor for that course and provide support for that suspicion. Any finding of responsibility and associated sanctions for a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy is retained per the College records policy. All students are expected to be familiar with the details of the Academic Honesty Policy (available via <https://www.sjfc.edu/policies/academic-integrity/>).

Mental Health Resources: see Blackboard

Source COMM100-01-2021-09 | Destination COMM281-01-2021-09 is complete. To access the detailed log, click here

Schedule

[Build Content](#)
[Assessments](#)
[Tools](#)
[Partner Content](#)


Schedule

Hidden Persuasion Assignments: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/14BDFeQzUz6PMAwCjwyhf7VW1V-sRGhQuUjCMVXKMUrc/edit?usp=sharing>

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
9/8	Introduction. Syllabus.		Acknowledging Resistance
9/10	Why Study Advertising?	Advertising and Consumer Society Chapter 1	
9/13	History of Advertising	Advertising and Consumer Society Chapter 2	
9/15	Semiotic Analysis	Advertising and Consumer Society Chapter 3	Fluency
9/17	Semiotic Analysis Workshop		Foot-in-the-Door
9/20	Advertising, Capitalism, and Ideology	Advertising and Consumer Society Chapter 4	Semiotic Ad Analysis due Promised Land
9/22	Social Media and Political Economy	"The Power and Political Economy of Social Media" by Christian Fuchs in <i>Social Media: An Introduction</i> . [Blackboard]	Self-Persuasion
9/24	Advertisinng Commodities and Commodity Fetishism (and an introduction to economics)	Advertising and Consumer Society Chapter 5	Altercasting
9/27	Exam #1		Exam #1
9/29	Audiences for Sale:	Advertising and Consumer Society Chapter 6	Social Proof

	Quantification, Segmentation and Personalization		
10/1	Analytics	Harvard Course Pack: Advertising Analytics 2.0	Guarantees
10/4	Advertising and Art From Creativity to Critique	Advertising and Consumer Society Chapter 8	Humor
10/6	Superbowl Ads	Harvard Course Pack: Super Bowl Storytelling	Scarcity/Fleeting Attraction
10/8	Design Activity	Mac Lab	
10/11	Design in Practice I		
10/13	Design in Practice II		
10/18	Advertising Agencies I	Advertising and Consumer Society Chapter 7	Decoy/That's Not All
10/20	Advertising Careers (Guest Panel)		Text ad due
10/22	Pricing and Behavioral Economics	Harvard Course Pack: Cashews, Coffee Mugs, and the Birth of Behavioral Economics	Mere Exposure/Anchoring
10/25	Ad Testing	Harvard Course Pack: Choosing an Advertising Research Strategy for Intuit [Neuromarketing, A/B testing]	Astrourfing/Trustworthiness
10/27	Media Buying	Harvard Course Pack: Media Buying and Strategy: Gardenburger Advertising Strategy	Disrupt & Reframe
10/29	Print/Television Ads	Harvard Course Pack: The New York Times Paywall & Television Competes for a Digital Audience	Metaphors/Implementation Intentions
11/1	Search Advertising	Harvard Course Pack: Programmatic Advertising & Paid Search Advertising	Media Buying Exercise Reciprocity/God Terms
11/3	Native Advertising	Harvard Course Pack: Good Native Advertising Isn't a Secret & BuzzFeed - What Future for Native Advertising and Branded Content?	Sex/Loss Vs. Gain Framing
11/5	Case Study: Promoting Services	"The Sharing Economy of Airbnb, Uber, and Upwork" by Christian Fuchs in <i>Social Media: An Introduction</i> . [Blackboard]	Recency & Primacy/Fear Appeals
11/8	Exam #2		Exam #2

11/10	Empowering Consumers: Engagement, Interpretation, and Resistance	Advertising and Consumer Society Chapter 9	Doublespeak
11/12	Brand Activism	Harvard Course Pack: Brand Activism: Nike and Colin Kaepernick	Projection
11/15	Social Good and Advertising	Harvard Course Pack: Dove Beauty Sketches Campaign	Door-in-the-Face/Subliminals
11/17	Adbusters" and Resistance	Read through this site: https://www.adbusters.org/	
11/19	"Adbusters" and Resistance Lab		
11/22	Adbusters Distribution. Take Home Exam Presented.		Resistance Exercise
11/29	Politics of Advertising: Capitalism, Resistance, and Liberalism	Advertising and Consumer Society Chapter 10	
12/1	Video Lab		
12/3	Final Project Lab I; Take Home Exam due.		Exam #3; Take Home Exam due
12/6	Final Project Lab II		
12/8	Final Project Lab III		
12/10	Final Project Lab IV		
Finals Week	Final Project Presentations		Final Project due