

Advertising as Social Communication: Discourse and Diversity

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ADV 378 (06200) | AFR 372E (30535) | WGS 340 (47770) | Fall 2014 | MW-10:00-11:15AM | CMA 3.124

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Course Website: <https://utexas.instructure.com/> (Canvas)

Course Description:

The “browning of America” brings with it fundamental shifts in the marketplace landscape. Today, approximately half of all young people in the U.S. are of color, and by the year 2040, people of color will comprise the majority of the total U.S. population. In addition to addressing dramatic alterations in the racial and ethnic configuration of the U.S., advertisers must also attend to significant cultural transitions that are transforming the marketplace. Advances in technology and healthcare have enabled children and older U.S. citizens to participate in consumer culture at unprecedented levels. Additionally, the growing visibility and collective buying power of LGBTQ and differently-abled consumers has solidified their status as market segments worthy of advertising expenditures.

This course will explore the economic, social, and cultural implications of multicultural advertising. Through an interdisciplinary investigation of theories and constructs from the fields of Marketing (Advertising), Communication Studies, Media/Cultural Studies, Queer Studies, Law (Critical Race Theory), Social Psychology, and Sociology we will engage with a range of topics that will further our understanding of diversity, inclusion, and social justice. Specific areas to be explored include the following:

- Race and Ethnicity
- Gender and Sexual Identity
- Social Class and Mobility
- Generational Cohorts
- Nationhood and Globalization
- Differently-abled Bodies

Subject areas will be discussed in accordance with how they are lived – intersecting and overlapping. Broadly, this course will interrogate the social and cultural value of advertising, and examine the ways in which advertising helps structure how we view ourselves and the world around us. Through interdisciplinary investigation, this course will provide students with the ability to critically examine advertising as social communication. This course will direct its attention to those who produce and consume advertising. It will also explore how technological advances have blurred the line between producer and consumer. Throughout the course the presence of power and inequity will be critically examined.

Required Textbook:

Title: Undressing the Ad: Reading Culture in Advertising

Authors: Katherine Toland Frith (ed.)

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Evaluation:

Professional Conduct.....	15 points
Culture Jamming Project (Group).....	25 points
Discussion Facilitation (Group).....	15 points
Peer Assessment.....	10 points
Exams (3).....	30 points
Research Participation.....	5 points
TOTAL.....	100 points

Grade Distribution:

<i>Point Total</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Point Total</i>	<i>Grade</i>
93 or more	A	77 – 79.99	C+
90 – 92.99	A-	73 – 76.99	C
87 – 89.99	B+	70 – 72.99	C-
83 – 86.99	B	60 – 69.99	D
80 – 82.99	B-	Below 60	F

❖ **Professional Conduct:** Your professional conduct in this course is worth 15% of your grade. The most important part of this grade is that you thoughtfully participate and engage consistently throughout the entire course. Respect is the name of the game. Being successful in this class requires that you demonstrate that you can work productively and respectfully with colleagues. The TA and I will monitor group discussions (both off and online) throughout the course. Your professional conduct grade will be based on our observations. Missed assignments will also be factored into your professional conduct grade.

❖ **Culture Jamming Project:** In this assignment groups of 5-6 students will develop an ad campaign that subverts problematic dominant meanings found in advertising. The assignment includes the following deliverables:

- (1) 30 second television commercial -- using video editing software and original content, the group reinvents a 30 second spot in a manner that subverts the original message
- (2) Print advertising campaign -- using photo editing software, the group reinvents a minimum of three (3) print advertisements.

Groups will present their work at the end of the semester. During their presentation groups will need to deconstruct what they did by specifying the dominant meanings they sought to subvert, explaining why those meanings were problematic, the subversive statement embedded in their culture jam, and the ways in which their subversive material may still be read as problematic.

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- ❖ **Discussion Facilitation:** Each group is responsible for leading class discussion for one week. As facilitators your main job is to stimulate and help conduct conversation. I hope that having students take turns leading the discussion will increase your investment in each other as classmates.

Things to keep in mind:

Facilitators

- Relax! It is your 'show' only in that you are responsible for having 'digested' the material a bit more than you might otherwise. Your classmates are still responsible for sustaining the conversation, and I am still here to help lead discussion and answer questions.
- Each discussion will begin with the group providing an augmented "[Ignite talk](#)," wherein they will present an overview of the week's readings in 5 minutes and 10 slides. The overview should provide key insights from each of the readings as well as synthesize concepts across readings. The overview should also include some general information on the authors for the week -- knowing a bit about their background and fields of study will help us all to understand their point of view and approach. Do NOT just recite a Wikipedia entry.
- Note paragraphs, quotes or examples that you want to come back to. If you find something provocative, we want to be able to take a look at it for ourselves! This is good advice for everyone in the course.
- Prepare and turn in to me a list of discussion questions. There should be at least 10 questions on this list. The questions should deal with matters of 'content' (the topic and argument) as well as method. If there are several readings for that day, do not just ask questions about each reading in turn. Several of your questions need to draw together the key issues across the readings.
- Media clips are NOT necessary. However, you may use them to illustrate something from the reading. No more than 10 minutes total can be spent on clips.
- Even if you are an expert on the subject, it is not your responsibility to enforce a particular interpretation of the material. Of course, this does not mean that you can't have or display an opinion.

All students

- Read carefully. Class doesn't work if we don't read. Period.
- (When applicable) Read footnotes. Often, there is vital and interesting information in there.
- Look at "Works Cited" list. As scholars, we need to think about how others use evidence, and what counts as evidence.
- Note specific passages that you want to discuss.
- Participate. Class doesn't work if we don't talk. Period.
- Interaction with your classmates is the primary objective of class discussions. **Talk to each other instead of just me.** I will not have a response for every comment.
- Don't be afraid to disagree with each other.
- Beware of "topic evasion." Given the sensitive nature of the topics covered during this course students often find it easy to talk about everything except the focal topic (i.e. race, sexuality, gender, etc.). If you skip it, I'll be sure to ask you about it.

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- ❖ **Peer Evaluations:** Your peers will grade you. Their evaluations will be based on the following: participation, collaboration, feedback, cooperation, and time management. While the grades for your Culture Jamming Project and Discussion Facilitation are the same for all group members, your peer evaluation grades may differ. If a group member underperforms during the class, his or her team members should use the peer evaluation to report this underperformance. 10% of your overall grade will come from the aggregated feedback your group members provide in your peer evaluation.

- ❖ **Exams:** There will be a total of three (3) exams administered to gauge your understanding of pertinent course material. Exams will consist of a combination of multiple choice, True/False, short answer, and essay questions. Exams will take place on Wed, September 24; Wed, October 22; and Wed, Nov 19. A study guide will be provided approximately 2 weeks prior to each exam.

- ❖ **Research Participation:** You will be asked to participate in two (2) Department of Advertising Participant Pool (see <http://advertising.utexas.edu/research/pool/advertising-participant-pool>) research studies throughout the semester. The Participant Pool will account for 5 percent of your final grade. Please check the above signup URL early and often, as the course includes no Participant Pool makeup or extra credit assignments. Also, be sure to keep your receipts for participating in each study, as if any error occurs in processing your credit, we can only correct the error if you provide the receipt as proof of participation.

- ❖ **Attendance:** Since this is a large class, attendance will not be taken each day. It is the responsibility of each student to be responsible for ensuring her or his own attendance in this class. Since attendance is a prerequisite for course participation and course exams are likely to include material raised during in-class discussion and/or examples shared by students or the instructor during class, excessive absences may severely impact your final grade.

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Course Schedule:

Date	Topic	Assignments/Readings
Week 1		
Wed, Aug 27	Course Introduction	
Week 2		
Mon, Sep 1	Reading Culture in Advertising	Labor Day (No Class)
Wed, Sep 3		Textbook – Chapter 1 Check Canvas for readings
Week 3		
Mon, Sep 8	Semiotics and Advertising	Textbook – Chapter 2 Check Canvas for readings
Wed, Sep 10		Check Canvas for readings Quiz 1 Study Guide (Canvas)
Week 4		
Mon, Sep 15	Gender in Advertising	Video: Codes of Gender
Wed, Sep 17		Textbook – Chapter 4 Check Canvas for readings
Week 5		
Mon, Sep 22	Quiz 1	Prep: Quiz 1
Wed, Sep 24		Quiz 1
Week 6		
Mon, Sep 29	Children in Advertising	Video: Consuming Kids
Wed, Oct 1		Check Canvas for readings
Week 7		
Mon, Oct 6	Promoting the Greater Good? Reading Culture in PR & PSAs	Video: Toxic Sludge is Good for You: The PR Industry Unspun
Wed, Oct 8		Textbook – Chapter 8 Quiz 2 Study Guide (Canvas)
Week 8		
Mon, Oct 13	Social Class in Advertising	Video: People Like Us
Wed, Oct 15		Textbook – Chapter 10

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Week 9		
Mon, Oct 20	Quiz 2	Prep: Quiz 2
Wed, Oct 22		Quiz 2
Week 10		
Mon, Oct 27	Race in Advertising	Check Canvas for readings
Wed, Oct 29		Check Canvas for readings
Discussion Facilitation		Textbook – Chapter 5
Week 11		
Mon, Nov 3	Differently Abled in Advertising	Check Canvas for readings
Wed, Nov 5		Check Canvas for readings
Discussion Facilitation		Quiz 3 Study Guide (Canvas)
Week 12		
Mon, Nov 10	Globalization in Advertising	Video: No Logo
Wed, Nov 12		Textbook – Chapter 3
Discussion Facilitation		Check Canvas for readings
Week 13		
Mon, Nov 17	Quiz 3	Prep: Quiz 3
Wed, Nov 19		Quiz 3
Week 14		
Mon, Nov 24	Thanksgiving	Research Day (No class)
Wed, Nov 26		Thanksgiving Break (No class)
Week 15		
Mon, Dec 2	Group Presentations	Groups 1-4
Wed, Dec 4		Groups 5-8

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Canvas

Canvas will serve as our online informational hub. Canvas is a learning management system (LMS) similar in scope to Blackboard. However, most users prefer the design and functionality of Canvas in comparison to Blackboard. Those of you that are new to Canvas may find the following information useful.

- [What is Canvas](#)
- [Canvas for Students](#)
- [Canvas Glossary](#)

Students with Disabilities

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 471-6441 (TTY). Faculty are not required to provide accommodations without an official accommodation letter from SSD.

Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty

The University defines academic dishonesty as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. Scholastic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment, and submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor. By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to these guidelines and must adhere to them. Scholastic dishonesty damages both the student's learning experience and readiness for the future demands of a work-career. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Please read more information at: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php.

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KEVIN D. THOMAS, PhD

Biographical Information

PhD, University of Texas at Austin, Advertising, 2011

MBA, California State Polytechnic University - Pomona, Entrepreneurship, 2005

BBA, Loyola Marymount University, Marketing, 2000

Dr. Thomas investigates the socio-cultural impact of marketing communication and consumer behavior. His primary research interest pertains to understanding the relationship between marketing communication, consumption practices, and notions of self and community. Using a consumer culture theory (CCT) perspective, Dr. Thomas explores the ways in which identity markers (i.e. race, gender, class, and sexuality) are represented in marketing communication and experienced in the marketplace. Other areas of research interests include multicultural advertising, issues of diversity and marketplace discrimination, and entrepreneurship and marketplace empowerment.