

# MDIA 209 Critical Approaches to Advertising and Consumer Culture

**Trimester 2 2015**

13 July to 15 November 2015

**20 Points**

## IMPORTANT DATES

Teaching dates: 13 July to 16 October 2015

Mid-trimester break: 24 August to 6 September 2015

Last assessment item due: 28 October 2015

Withdrawal dates:

Refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds). If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats).

## CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Wednesday 12noon-1.50pm New Kirk KKL301

### Tutorials

Tutorials begin in WEEK 2. Please register for tutorials via the MDIA 209 site on Blackboard: go to “Tutorial Instructions” and follow the instructions carefully. Remember to record your tutorial time, day and room for future reference.

## NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Course Coordinator and Lecturer: Dr Geoff Stahl

Email: [geoff.stahl@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:geoff.stahl@vuw.ac.nz)

Phone: (04) 463 7472

Room: 205, 81 Fairlie Terrace

Office Hours: Wednesday 2.00-4.00pm; and by appointment.

## COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Blackboard will be used throughout this course. PowerPoint presentations will be posted here, BEFORE the lecture. Questions regarding the course, readings, assignments, etc., should be posted on Blackboard.

If you are not going to use the Victoria email address set up for you, we strongly encourage you to set a forward from the Victoria email system to the email address you do use.

## PRESCRIPTION

This course is not designed to train students in advertising, but rather to develop the analytical techniques required to make sense of the ways in which advertising and consumer culture affect every one of us. To this end, the course will cover the history of advertising and consumer culture, but will also focus mainly on the various ways in which they have recently been analysed, theorised and critiqued.

## COURSE CONTENT

The filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard once described an earlier generation as the children of Marx and Coca-Cola. As a gloss on contemporary culture, this still holds true, although we may well now call them the children of Baudrillard and Red Bull. In a Western consumer culture in which advertising holds a central place in everyday life--from public spaces, to television, popular music, film, and the Internet--it is important that we develop the requisite critical skills that will allow us to engage with advertising texts and contexts as part of our daily routine. This course is designed not to train students in advertising then, but rather to hone the analytical techniques required to make sense of the ways in which advertising and consumer culture affect each and every one of us. To this end, the course will cover the history of advertising and consumer culture, seeing them as phenomena which have changed over time, but will focus mainly on the various ways in which they have recently been analysed, theorised and critiqued.

## COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES (CLOS)

Students who pass this course should be able to:

- 1) Recognise and evaluate the role played by advertising and consumer culture.
- 2) Identify and apply analytical approaches to select aspects of advertising and consumer culture.
- 3) Synthesise and critique the different critical approaches taken to advertising and consumer culture.
- 4) Demonstrate critical thinking, argumentation, original research and writing skills.

## TEACHING FORMAT

The course will be given in lecture form, with tutorials dedicated to that week's lecture and scheduled readings.

## MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

To pass this course, students must attain the following:

- Complete all assignments, each with a passing grade of at least 50% in order to demonstrate achievement of all CLOs in the course.
- Attend 8 of 11 tutorials unless otherwise excused by the Course Coordinator. Tutorials will provide a space for students to individually and collectively engage with the various approaches discussed in lectures and readings. Tutorials will also be a space where writing and original research skills will be discussed in more detail.

Any student who is concerned that they have been (or might be) unable to meet any of these mandatory course requirements because of exceptional personal circumstances, should contact the course coordinator as soon as possible.

## WORKLOAD

The expected workload for a 20-point course is 200 hours over the trimester or 13 hours per teaching week.

## ASSESSMENT

	Assessment items and workload per item	%	CLO(s)	Due date
1	<b>CLOSE READING: 1400-1500 words</b>	20%	1, 2, 4	<b>MON, 10 AUG, 2.00pm</b>
2	<b>READING RESPONSES 4 X 500 words</b>	40%	1, 2, 3	<b>BETWEEN WEEKS 7 - 11</b>
3	<b>TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENT: 2400-2500 words</b>	40%	1-4	<b>WEDS, 28 OCT, 2.00pm</b>

- **First Assignment: CLOSE READING: 1400-1500 words [20%]**  
 You are to do a close reading of a still image (can be from a magazine, or any ad found in Wellington), using Roland Barthes' essay "Rhetoric of the Image." You may also draw upon any of the other readings set for Weeks Two and Three. Students will be expected to demonstrate an analytical approach to their chosen media text. (Learning Objectives 1, 2 4)  
**Due Date: MONDAY 10 AUGUST, 2.00pm**
- **Second Assignment: READING RESPONSES 4 X 500 words [4 X 10% = 40%]**  
 Students will submit four reading responses (one reading each from a possible five weeks), engaging with set questions for readings in the course. The questions will be distributed in Week Six (before the mid-trimester break). The responses will be handed in at the end of the chosen week's tutorial. (Learning Objectives 1, 2, 3)  
**Due dates: In Tutorials, between Weeks 7 and 11**

- **Third Assignment: TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENT: 2400-2500 words [40%]**

Students will be expected to illustrate the applicability of a select number of approaches and perspectives to advertising and consumer culture introduced in the course, basing their response on a set question which will use material drawn from the course readings, including those of Week 12. (Learning Objectives 1-4)

**Question Distributed Week 11, in class**

**Due date: WEDNESDAY 28 OCTOBER, 2.00pm**

### **SUBMISSION AND RETURN OF WORK**

Work provided for assessment in this course will be checked for academic integrity by Turnitin. Follow the instructions provided in the "Assignments and Turnitin" section of Blackboard.

Hardcopy assignments are submitted in the drop slot outside the administration office: 83 Fairlie Terrace.

Attach an assignment cover sheet found on Blackboard or outside the administration office. Remember to fill in your tutor's name. Please do not use a plastic folder.

Your marked assignment will be handed back by your tutor in tutorials or during their office hours. Any uncollected assignments can be picked up from the Programme Administrator after the last day of teaching. Assignments will be held in the administration office until the end of the following trimester. You need to show your student identification to collect marked assignment from the administration office.

### **EXTENSIONS AND PENALTIES**

#### **Extensions**

In exceptional and unforeseen circumstances an extension may be granted. To apply for an extension, email your Course Coordinator before the assignment is due. If granted, your Course Coordinator will inform you of the new due date. Tutors cannot grant extensions. **No assignment with or without an extension will be accepted after Wednesday 4 November 2015.**

#### **Penalties**

Work submitted after the deadline will be penalised by a 2.5 percent deduction from your total mark per work day. Late work also receives only minimal comments from your marker.

### **SET TEXTS**

MDIA 209 Student Notes (optional).

Readings will be made available electronically via Blackboard, with an optional Student Notes.

Supplementary readings, which are optional but very useful, will also be made available through Blackboard.

You can order student notes online at [www.vicbooks.co.nz](http://www.vicbooks.co.nz) or can email an order or enquiry to [enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz](mailto:enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz).

## RECOMMENDED READING

A number of books relating to the course have been placed at closed reserve, on three-day loan. Please check the Library listing for this course for more details.

## CLASS REPRESENTATIVE

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first lecture of the course. Students may like to write the Class Rep's name and details in this box:

Class Rep name and contact details:

## STUDENT FEEDBACK

Student feedback on University courses may be found at

[www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback\\_display.php](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php).

In week six or seven of the trimester your class representative will be invited to a meeting with the Programme staff. In week five your class representative will ask the class for any feedback on this course to discuss at this meeting.

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism)
- Aegrotats: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats)
- Academic Progress: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress) (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates)
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: [www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin)
- Grades: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades)
- Resolving academic issues: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications)
- Special passes: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications)
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute:  
[www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy)
- Student support: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support)
- Students with disabilities: [www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/disability](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability)
- Student Charter: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter)

- Student Contract: [www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract)
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Turnitin: [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin)
- University structure: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure)
- Victoria graduate profile: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile)
- VUWSA: [www.vuwsa.org.nz](http://www.vuwsa.org.nz)
- School website: [www.victoria.ac.nz/seftms](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/seftms)

## COURSE PROGRAMME

Week 1 15 July **Introduction to Course: A Short History of Advertising and Consumer Culture**

Stahl, Geoff. "Advertising: Mapping the 'New and Improved' Mediascape." *Being Cultural*. Bruce M.Z. Cohen, Ed. Auckland: Pearson, 2011. 229-241. Print.

Week 2 22 July **Reading Ads**

Barthes, Roland. "Rhetoric of the Image." *The Visual Culture Reader*. Nicholas Mirzoeff, Ed. New York: Routledge, 1998. 70-73. Print.

Barthes, Roland. "Soap Powders and Detergents." *Mythologies*. London: Paladin, 1989. 40-42. Print.

Thompson, John O. "Advertising's Rationality." *The Media Reader*. Manuel Alvarado and John O. Thompson, Eds. London: BFI, 1990. 208-212. Print.

Week 3 29 July **Commodity and Consumer Culture**

Marx, Karl. "The Fetishism of the Commodity and its Secret." *The Consumer Society Reader*. Martyn J. Lee, Ed., New York: Blackwell, 2000, pp. 10-18. Print.

Dunn, Robert G. "The Triumph of the Commodity: Theoretical Lineages." *Identifying Consumption: Subjects and Objects in Consumer Society*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008. 21-50. Print.

Week 4 5 Aug **Material Culture: Things That Move Us and the Movement of Things**

Appelgren, Staffan, and Anna Bohlin. "Growing in Motion: The Circulation of Used Things on Second-Hand Markets." *Culture Unbound: Journal of Current Cultural Research*. 7.1 (2015): 145-168. Web.

Straw, Will. "Spectacles of Waste." *Circulation and the City: Essays on Urban Culture*. Alexandra Boutros and Will Straws, Eds. Montreal: McGill-Queens Press, 2010. 193-213. Print.

**REMINDER: FIRST ASSIGNMENT DUE MONDAY, 10 AUGUST, 2 PM.**

Week 5 12 Aug **Fashion: Style and Revolution**

Barnard, Malcolm. "Fashion, Clothing and Social Revolution." *Fashion as Communication*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. London: Routledge, 2002. 127-155. Print.

Week 6 19 Aug **Gender, Sexuality and Consumer Culture**

Evans, Adrienne and Sarah Riley. "Sex, Identity, and Consumer Culture." *Technologies of Sexiness: Sex, Identity, and Consumer Culture*. London: Oxford University Press, 2014. 1-16. Print.

Banet-Weiser, Sarah. "'Free Self-Esteem Tools': Brand Culture, Gender, and the Dove Real Beauty Campaign." *Cultural Resistance in Neoliberal Times*. Roopali Mukherjee and Sarah Banet-Weiser, Eds. New York: NYU Press, 2012. 39-56. eBook.

**N.B. QUESTIONS FOR ASSIGNMENT TWO DISTRIBUTED.**

**Mid Trimester Break: Monday 24 August to Sunday 6 September 2015**

**Week 7 9 Sept Consuming Cultures: Food and Celebrity Chefs**

Stringfellow, Lindsay, Andrew MacLaren, Mairi Maclean and Kevin O’Gorman. “Conceptualizing Taste: Food, Culture and Celebrities.” *Tourism Management*. 37 (2013): 77-85. Print.

Magee, Richard M. “Food Puritanism and Food Pornography: The Gourmet Semiotics of Martha and Nigella.” *Americana: The Journal of American Popular Culture 1900 to Present*. 6.2 (2007). Web.

**Week 8 16 Sept Consuming Places: New Zealand**

Bell, Claudia. “Kiwiana Goes Upmarket: Vernacular Mobilization in the New Century.” *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*. 26.2 (2012): 275-288. Print.

Ateljevic, Irena and Stephen Doorne. “Representing New Zealand: Tourism Imagery and Ideology.” *Annals of Tourism Research*. 29.5 (2002): 648-667. Print.

**Week 9 23 Sept Places of Consumption: The City, Culinary Spaces (and Craft Beer)**

Cronin, Anne. “Advertising and the Metabolism of the City: Urban Space, Commodity Rhythms.” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. 24 (2006): 615-632. Print.

Campbell, Colin. “The Craft Consumer: Culture, Craft and Consumption in a Postmodern Society.” *Journal of Consumer Culture*. 5.1 (2005): 23-42. Print.

**Week 10 30 Sept Consumption and Its Limits: Boredom, Waiting and Distraction**

Aho, Kevin. “Simmel on Acceleration, Boredom and Extreme Aesthesis.” *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*. 37.4 (2007): 447-462. Print.

Gasparini, Giovanni. “On Waiting.” *Time and Society*. 4.1 (1995): 29-45. Print.

**Week 11 7 Oct Interventions and Activism: Promises and Paradoxes**

Harold, Christine. “Pranking Rhetoric: ‘Culture Jamming’ as Media Activism.” *The Advertising and Consumer Culture Reader*. Joseph Turow and Matthew P. McAllister, Eds. London: Routledge, 2009. 348-368. Print.

Little, Jo. “Good Housekeeping: Green Products and Consumer Activism.” *Cultural Resistance in Neoliberal Times*. Roopali Mukherjee and Sarah Banet-Weiser, Eds. New York: NYU Press, 2012. 76-92. eBook.

**N.B.: Take-Home Assignment Distributed**

**Week 12 14 Oct Branding, Promotional Culture and You™**

Hearn, Alison. “‘Meat, Mask, Burden’: Probing the Contours of the Branded ‘Self.’” *Journal of Consumer Culture*. 8.2 (2008): 197-217. Print.



--. "Through the Looking Glass': The Promotional University 2.0." *Blowing Up the Brand*. Melissa Aronczyk and Devon Powers, Eds. New York: Peter Lang, 2010. 197-219. Print.

\*OPTIONAL READING: Anderson, Nicholas and Kim Wheatley. "Self Branding, Service Logic and the Humanities: A New Perspective".  
<http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org/tne/pieces/self-branding-service-logic-and-humanities-new-zealand-perspective>. Web.

**REMINDER: THIRD ASSIGNMENT DUE WEDNESDAY, 28 OCTOBER 2 PM.**