

FIRST YEAR COMPOSITION (ENG 125)
COLLEGE WRITING AND THE LANGUAGES OF ADVERTISING

It is no longer enough to simply read and write. Students must also become literate in the understanding of visual messages...to distinguish facts from propaganda, analysis from banter, and important news from coverage.

—Ernest Boyer

Norman Douglas once wrote, “You can tell the ideals of a nation by their advertisements.” The average American encounters approximately 3,000 advertisements per day—on buses and t-shirts, on pens at the bank, on billboards, in magazines, on television, and even on human skin. Copywriters, admen, and marketers make highly purposeful choices about every aspect of the advertisements populating the horizon, from background color to camera angle to the ideals of the target audience. Increasingly, film and other media are also becoming key sites in the culture of advertising; films may not advertise in the strictest sense, but they do advertise ideology. And for the most part, we buy into it all. It is a premise of this course that we—as readers, as students, as citizens and as consumers—should be just as concerned about what and how these advertisements signify. In this course, the language of advertising will become the point of departure for our inquiry into the work of good writing. Advertisements—successful advertisements—are meant to persuade the consumer to not only buy, but also buy into the ethos represented; as writers, your goal is to present, clearly and persuasively, a position to your audience. The two, you will have noted, are not dissimilar. While I do not expect that this class will “teach you how to write,” it should begin the process. Therefore, written work for this course will be intensive. By the end of the term, you should have a portfolio of 25 pages of polished, college-level prose. No books are necessary for this course.

Schedule

09/03/2003 (Wed)



Introductions

Today we will get the usual administrative things out of the way, like the course overview and expectations. We will be doing a "blind taste test" to kick-start our first discussion, and at the end of class I will give you a diagnostic grammar quiz. The purpose of this quiz is to give me an idea of your facility with grammar, mechanics, and syntax. It will not be graded.

09/03/2003 (Wed)





Assignment

1. Read "Brought to You B(u)y: The Signs of Advertising," and "Masters of Desire: The Culture of American Advertising."

2. DUE MONDAY - Diagnostic short essay: Find an advertisement that strikes you in some way, whether positively or negatively (note: sometimes things that strike you negatively are easier to write about!). In two pages, describe the ad, tell your reader what it's trying to do and how it's trying to do it, and then determine whether it is successful in the terms you've articulated. This is a diagnostic short essay, meaning that A.) it will not be graded, and B.) it should accurately represent your skill as a writer.

Resources:

1.  [Maasik and Solomon: "Brought to You B\(u\)y"](#)
2.  [Solomon: "Masters of Desire: The Culture of American Advertising"](#)

09/07/2003 (Sun)



Due: Response 1

During the course of this term, I will ask you to summarize, in your own words, the main points of the day's assigned reading. I will count ten of these responses toward your final grade. Because you should be reading this material and thinking critically about it regardless of whether the responses are graded, I will not tell you which of the assignments will be graded.

The idea behind this sequence of assignments is to sustain the work of critical thought. These assignments are also meant to encourage you to think about how each author is able to communicate his or her argument. Because this is a writing course, you should begin to approach the assigned readings as potential models for your own writing. Some will be good models; others, not so good. But always, you should be actively engaged with both the content and the form of each reading.

For each response, I will ask you to consider especially one or two points. Often, these points will call for a mixture of summary and reflection.

Please remember, too, that though in the Humanities the line delineating "right" from "wrong" is often blurred, we are all speaking the same language. And because we need to agree that communication is possible, I hold fast to the notion that there are some responses that are more right than others.

Keep your responses to one paragraph or less in length. If you feel comfortable answering with a single sentence, that's alright, too.

Please direct your browser to https://lessons.umm.umich.edu/2k/F03ENG_125/response_01 and complete the online assignment.











09/08/2003 (Mon)





Session Resources

Resources for our class session:




Resources:



1.  [A Working Guide to the Writing Handbook](#)
2.  [All Clad - Signature](#)
3.  [Coke and Pepsi Slogans](#)
4.  [How to Define a Brand \(from a marketer's perspective\)](#)
5.  [Lesson Plan: Branding](#)
6.  [Lincoln Aviator](#)
7.  [Maasik and Solomon: "Brought to You B\(u\)y"](#)
8.  [Midol Ad - Realism](#)
9.  [Taste Test Results: Introduction to Evidence - Argument - Warrant](#)
10.  [Writing Handbook](#)

09/08/2003 (Mon)   **Assignment**

1. Read the handout on "Advertising Techniques and How They Work."
2. Read Lutz, "Weasel Words."
3. Read Kehl, "How to Read an Ad"
4. Bring to class an advertisement that performs one or more of these techniques, and come prepared to discuss it.

Resources:



1.  [Advertising Techniques and How They Work](#)
2.  [Kehl: "How to Read an Ad"](#)
3.  [Lutz: "Weasel Words"](#)

09/10/2003 (Wed)   **Assignment**

1. Read Newt Gingrich's GOPAC pamphlet, "Language: A Key Mechanism of Control"
2. Read Cross, "Propaganda: How Not to Be Bamboozled"
3. Using the terms we've read about in "How to Read an Ad" (Voice, Audience, Purpose, Intention, Devices) and "Weasel Words," write a one-page analytical essay about an advertisement of your choice. Come prepared to discuss.
4. ESSAY 1 TO BE ASSIGNED on Monday. This essay will be a personal narrative in a similar vein to the diagnostic essay you've already written. You might think about ways to revise.









Resources:

1.  [Cross: "Propaganda: How Not to Be Bamboozled"](#)
2.  [Gingrich - "Language: A Key Mechanism of Control"](#)

09/10/2003 (Wed)   **Session Resources**

Resources for today's class:

Resources:

1.  [adbusters.org](#)
2.  [Advertisement Avenue](#)
3.  [Ad*Access](#)
4.  [Classic Auto Advertising](#)
5.  [Slate.com - Ad Report Cards](#)
6.  [Style and Word Choice: Connotation/Denotation](#)
7.  [Style and Word Choice: Definition](#)
8.  [Style and Word Choice: Emotive Language](#)

9.  The Guardian Newspaper - Advertising

09/15/2003 (Mon)



The Merchants of Cool

Today, we'll be watching a PBS film called *The Merchants of Cool*. *The Merchants* first aired February 27, 2001. It unearths some of the invisible strings that make the media work. The film pays particular attention to the media giant Viacom and its key moneymaker, MTV.




09/15/2003 (Mon)



Assignment

1. Read Marchand, "The Parable of the Democracy of Goods."
2. Re-read/skim Solomon, "Masters of Desire," and think about what we've read so far (especially Gingrich's pamphlet and Hirshberg on the rhetoric of advertising).
3. Post or reply to a new comment on the class discussion board. Feel free to ask a question, too, about anything we've read or seen.
4. Brainstorm three ideas for your first essay, jotting down a few notes for each. Come prepared to discuss them with your peers on Wednesday.

Resources:

1.  Gingrich - "Language: A Key Mechanism of Control"
2.  Marchand: "Parable of the Democracy of Goods"
3.  Solomon: "Masters of Desire: The Culture of American Advertising"

09/17/2003 (Wed)



Assignment

1. Read Chapter 1 of Klein's NO LOGO.
2. Visit www.adbusters.org
3. Come prepared to discuss "branding."
4. OPTIONAL READING: For those interested, you can read one of the Reichert articles--"Arousing Aspirations," for instance.

Resources:

1.  adbusters.org
2.  Klein: "No Logo"
3.  Reichert - "Arousing Aspirations"

09/17/2003 (Wed)




Group Work - Essay 1

Circulate the three ideas for your first paper to small peer groups. Discuss what you've thought of and why, which idea of the three might be best suited for this assignment, and how you might go about writing your idea into an essay.

ACTIVITY: NO LOGOS!

09/17/2003 (Wed)  **Workshop Signup**
Sign up for one of three workshop days.




09/22/2003 (Mon)  **Meet in Current Periodicals**
Today we will meet in the Graduate Library's Current Periodicals room (2nd floor, left out of the elevators). After a discussion of Klein and "branding," we will look at a wide cross-section of advertising environments and the audience each constructs.


09/22/2003 (Mon)   **Assignment**
Work on essay 1 draft.

Read attached handouts on clarity and style, definition and description, and emotive language.

WORKSHOPPERS: Post your draft to the discussion board, clearly labeled in the subject line with your name and workshop group. Please post your draft by Tuesday the 23rd, so that your workshop group can read it prior to class. It is wise to bring a printout of each essay to be workshopped to class with you! Each member of the group should print out a copy for her/himself. This means that A.) each student workshopping an essay posts it the discussion board, clearly labeled as above, and B.) each member of the workshop group prints out and brings to class all drafts posted by her/his workshop group.

Resources:

1.  [Clarity and Style](#)
2.  [Style and Word Choice: Definition](#)
3.  [Style and Word Choice: Emotive Language](#)

09/24/2003 (Wed)  **Workshop: Clarity, Word Choice**
Small-group workshop focussing on clarity, style, and word choice.

09/24/2003 (Wed)  **Assignment**
Work on essay 1 draft.



WORKSHOPPERS: Post your draft to the discussion board, clearly labeled in the subject line with your name and workshop group. Please post your draft by Sunday the 28th, so that your workshop group can read it prior to class. It is wise to bring a printout of each essay to be workshopped to class with you! Each member of the group should print out a copy for her/himself. This means that A.) each student workshopping an essay posts it the discussion board, clearly labeled as above, and B.) each member of the workshop group prints out and brings to class all drafts posted by her/his workshop group.

09/29/2003 (Mon)  **Workshop: Clarity, Word Choice**
Small-group workshops focussing on clarity, style, and word choice.

09/29/2003 (Mon)  **Assignment**
Work on essay 1 draft.

WORKSHOPPERS: Post your draft to the discussion board, clearly labeled in the subject line with your name and workshop group. Please post your

draft by Tuesday the 30th, so that your workshop group can read it prior to class. It is wise to bring a printout of each essay to be workshopped to class with you! Each member of the group should print out a copy for her/himself. This means that A.) each student workshopping an essay posts it the discussion board, clearly labeled as above, and B.) each member of the workshop group prints out and brings to class all drafts posted by her/his workshop group.

10/01/2003 (Wed)  

Assignment

1. Work on essay 1 drafts. Essays due on Friday.
2. Read O'Barr, "Analyzing Social Ideology in Advertisements"
3. Read Berger's "Glossary"
4. Bring in an ad for group reading. Be sure to choose one you are prepared to discuss in the terms offered by O'Barr and Berger.

Resources:

1.  [Berger: "Glossary"](#)
2.  [O'Barr: "Analyzing Social Ideology in Advertisements"](#)

10/01/2003 (Wed)



Workshop: Clarity, Word Choice



Small-group workshop for the first part of class, and whole-class workshop on problem areas for the remainder.

10/03/2003 (Fri)



Essay 1 Due



Your first essay is due by 5:00pm, in my Angell Hall mailbox (3161 AH). The door is locked sharply at 5:00.



10/06/2003 (Mon)  

Assignment

1. Read Irvine, "Sprayed and Neutered"
2. Visit "Semiotics and Advertising" website, and complete the interactive program.
3. Bring in another advertisement for group reading. Be sure to choose one that you are prepared to discuss in the terms offered us by semiotics.

Resources:

1.  [Irvine: "Sprayed and Neutered"](#)
2.  [Streeter: Semiotics and Advertising](#)

10/08/2003 (Wed)  

Assignment



1. Read Berger, "Analyzing Print Advertisements" and "Analyzing Television Commercials"

HAVE A GOOD BREAK!

Resources:

1.  [Berger: "Analyzing Print Advertisements"](#)
2.  [Berger: "Analyzing Television Commercials"](#)

10/13/2003 (Mon)  **Fall Study Break: No Classes**

10/15/2003 (Wed)   **Assignment**



1. Read "We've Come a Long Way, Maybe"
2. Read Steinem, "Sex, Lies, and Advertising"
3. Summarize one article and post it to the class discussion board.

Resources:

1.  [Maasik and Solomon: "You've Come a Long Way - Maybe"](#)
2.  [Steinem: "Sex - Lies - and Advertising"](#)

10/15/2003 (Wed)  **Writing Handbook Presentation**


Informal presentation of progress on writing handbook. Expect to present for 5 minutes per group.

10/20/2003 (Mon)   **Assignment**

1. Read Klein, "The Beauty Myth"
2. Read "Argument: An Overview"
3. Post or reply to a new comment on the class discussion board. You might want to consider responding to the assigned readings on gender.
4. Bring in an advertisement for group reading. Be sure to choose one you are prepared to discuss in terms of its gender dynamics.

Resources:



1.  [Argument: An Overview](#)
2.  [Klein: "The Beauty Myth"](#)

10/20/2003 (Mon)  **Sex Matters**

Today we'll watch KILLING US SOFTLY 3. Keyword: "gender asymmetry."

10/22/2003 (Wed)  **Workshop Signup**

Sign up for essay 2 workshops.

10/22/2003 (Wed)   **Assignment**



1. Read Barthel, "A Gentleman and a Consumer"
2. Bring in an advertisement for group reading. Be sure to choose one you are prepared to discuss in terms of gender analysis.
3. Read "How to Assert Significance in Your Thesis"

Resources:

1.  [Barthel: "A Gentleman and a Consumer"](#)
2.  [How to Assert Significance in Your Thesis](#)

10/27/2003 (Mon)  **Tough Guise**

Today we'll watch part one of TOUGH GUISE and discuss assigned articles.



10/27/2003 (Mon)   **Assignment**

1. Read Lukenbill, "You Can Take It to the Bank"

2. Bring in an advertisement for group reading. Be sure to choose one you are prepared to discuss in terms of the "code" to which Lukenbill refers.

Resources:

1.  [Lukenbill - "You Can Take It to the Bank"](#)

10/29/2003 (Wed)   **Assignment**

1. Read "Two Common Pitfalls in Argument"

2. Work on essay 2 draft.


WORKSHOPPERS: Post your draft to the discussion board, clearly labeled in the subject line with your name and workshop group. Please post your draft by Sunday the 2nd, so that your workshop group can read it prior to class. It is wise to bring a printout of each essay to be workshopped to class with you! Each member of the group should print out a copy for her/himself. This means that A.) each student workshopping an essay posts it to the discussion board, clearly labeled as above, and B.) each member of the workshop group prints out and brings to class all drafts posted by her/his workshop group.

Resources:

1.  [Two Common Pitfalls in Argument](#)

11/03/2003 (Mon)  **Workshop: Thesis, Evidence, Org**

Small-group workshops, focussing on thesis, evidence, and organization.



11/03/2003 (Mon)  **Assignment**

Work on essay 2 draft.

WORKSHOPPERS: Post your draft to the discussion board, clearly labeled in the subject line with your name and workshop group. Please post your draft by Tuesday the 4th, so that your workshop group can read it prior to class. It is wise to bring a printout of each essay to be workshopped to class with you! Each member of the group should print out a copy for her/himself. This means that A.) each student workshopping an essay posts it to the discussion board, clearly labeled as above, and B.) each member of the workshop group prints out and brings to class all drafts posted by her/his workshop group.

- 11/05/2003 (Wed)  **Assignment**
Work on essay 2 draft.
- WORKSHOPPERS: Post your draft to the discussion board, clearly labeled in the subject line with your name and workshop group. Please post your draft by Tuesday the 4th, so that your workshop group can read it prior to class. It is wise to bring a printout of each essay to be workshopped to class with you! Each member of the group should print out a copy for her/himself. This means that A.) each student workshopping an essay posts it to the discussion board, clearly labeled as above, and B.) each member of the workshop group prints out and brings to class all drafts posted by her/his workshop group.
- 11/05/2003 (Wed)  **Workshop: Thesis, Evidence, Org**
Small-group workshops, followed by whole-class workshop on problem areas.
- 11/10/2003 (Mon)   **Assignment**
1. Read Omi, "In Living Color"
 2. Read DeMott, "Put on a Happy Face..."
 3. Post or reply to a new comment on the class discussion board. You might want to respond to the readings on race in advertising.
- Resources:
1.  [DeMott: "Put on a Happy Face..."](#)
 2.  [Omi: "In Living Color: Race and American Culture"](#)
- 11/11/2003 (Tue)  **Essay 2 Due**
Essay 2 is due by 5:00pm in my Angell Hall mailbox (3161 AH). Please remember that the door is locked sharply at 5:00.
- 11/12/2003 (Wed)   **Assignment**
1. Read "Finding a Topic"
 2. Read Dotz, "Advertising Character"
 3. Read "American Icons"
 4. Brainstorm 2 possible topics for essay 3, and be prepared to hand them in on 11/19.
- Resources:
1.  [Dotz - "Advertising Character"](#)
 2.  [Finding a Topic](#)
 3.  [Maasik and Solomon: "American Icons"](#)
- 11/17/2003 (Mon)  **Writing Handbook Presentation**
Informal group presentation of writing-handbooks-in-progress. Expect to present for 5 minutes per group.

ESSAY 3 ASSIGNED.

11/17/2003 (Mon)  

Assignment

1. Read Kern-Foxworth, "Aunt Jemima: The Most Battered Woman in America Rises to the Top"

NOTE: The Kern-Foxworth chapter is very long; in fact, this is the longest single assignment of the term. I've deliberately included the table of contents, the index, as well as a photo essay that falls midway through the book. Please read as much as you can--we're going to discuss this chapter as a representative research essay. Be sure to skim over the table of contents, index, etc.. We will continue reading this chapter for the next assignment.

Resources:

1.  [Kern-Foxworth - "Aunt Jemima...Rises to the Top"](#)



11/19/2003 (Wed)



Meet in Graduate Library

Meet in the Graduate Library to take a tour of the facilities, learn how to do research, etc.. We will meet on the second floor of the Grad Library--Judy Avery will be our guide.

Complete essay 3 preliminary research assignment (brainstorming).



11/19/2003 (Wed)  

Assignment

1. Read Kern-Foxworth chapter. Note: this chapter is very long; I've deliberately included the table of contents, index, and photo essay. Please do try to read the whole thing. In class, we'll construct an outline of the text--thinking about organization and argument.

Resources:

1.  [Kern-Foxworth - "Aunt Jemima...Rises to the Top"](#)

11/24/2003 (Mon)  

Modification Answers

Resources:

1.  [Editing Problem Sentences--Modification et.al.](#)

11/24/2003 (Mon)



Group Brainstorming Essay 3

In small groups, present on your brainstormed topics for essay 3. Be prepared to give and receive constructive criticism and other forms of advice. We'll do some freewriting on your topic, and then we'll work on outlining and researching.

Freewriting Exercise for Essay 3

- Freewrite on your chosen topic for 7 minutes. Don't worry about spelling or

grammar, or even finding the right word, just write down your thoughts about your topic without stopping.

- After the time is up, look back at what you've written to identify the most important point(s) that came out.
- Try to write one sentence that encapsulates the most important idea from the first free-writing exercise.
- Now begin freewriting again about that sentence for another five minutes or so. After the time is up, stop and again look at what you've written. Then once more express the most important idea in a new sentence.
- At home, do this whole process once more. After this third free-writing exercise you should find that you can write a sentence which is a much clearer expression of your original thoughts.
- This sentence will now serve as a main point for your essay. It may become your thesis, or you might find that, after these exercises, you've come up with a larger argument. In this case, your sentence will become a supporting claim for your essay.

11/24/2003 (Mon) 📅 !

Word Choice Take-Home Quiz

Please complete this take-home quiz over the break. I will collect it next class period.

Resources:

1. [📄Editing Problem Sentences--Word Choice et.al.](#)

11/24/2003 (Mon) 📅 !

Assignment

1. Read Twitchell, "American Culture Awash in a Sea of Advertising"
2. Over the break, you'll have two major assignments, in addition to the Twitchell reading.
 - a. Compile your preliminary research for Essay 3 (get it all together in one place). Then, redact each piece of research into its most important points (in one or two complete sentences, write out the author's argument and why/how this will be useful to the argument you plan to make in Essay 3-- this is called an "annotation"). Please type this bibliography, and be sure to head each redaction with a bibliographic note identifying the source. See the attached resources on creating an annotated bibliography. Visit the OWL site at Purdue University for more information about creating a works cited page in MLA format.
 - b. Construct a comprehensive outline of your third essay. Remember that this outline is not set in stone; you can always change it, or even throw it out if you like. But do write in complete sentences; give some

sense of the argument you plan to create,
as well as the evidence you plan to use
and how it will support your argument.
Bring all of this work to class after
Thanksgiving.

Resources:

1. [Annotated Bibliography--example](#)
2. [The MLA Bibliographic Form--OWL at Purdue](#)
3. [Twitchell - "American Culture Awash in a Sea of Advertising"](#)

11/26/2003 (Wed)   **Thanksgiving: No Class**

1. (Re)read all available materials on writing. Be prepared for a possible quiz on this material.
2. Read materials on web-based research. Next meeting in computer lab 2nd floor UGLi.

Resources:

1. [Checklist for Evaluating Web Sources](#)
2. [Evaluating Webpages](#)
3. [Rensselaer Polytechnic Writing Center - Style and Clarity](#)

12/01/2003 (Mon)  **Using the Web for Research**

Today we'll be meeting in the Undergraduate Library's PC computing site, room number 2054 on the second floor.

SIGN UP FOR CONFERENCE #2

VISIT THE FOLLOWING WEBSITE:

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html>

EVALUATE TWO OF THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES:

<http://www.grenoble.iufm.fr/T3/Java/Didafin4/html/guide.html>

<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/ea/>

<http://www.lileks.com/institute/orphanage/index.html>

<http://www.adflip.com/>

SEARCHING THE WEB:

<http://www.google.com>

<http://lii.org>

USING UM RESOURCES:

Wilson Select Plus [FirstSearch]
AND
WorldCat (OCLC Online Union Catalog) [FirstSearch]

both available through UM electronic resources page:
<http://www.lib.umich.edu/eresources/user.php?char=W>

HarpWeek (Harper's Weekly Journal online issues to 20th century)
<http://80-app.harpweek.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/>

ProQuest Historical Newspapers
<http://80-proquest.umi.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/pqdweb?RQT=301&UserId=IPAUTO&Passwd=IPAUTO&JSEnabled=1&COPT=U01EPTYmSU5UPTAmREJTPTFBQ0MrMUFDR@@>

MIRLYN WEB:
<http://mirlyn.web.lib.umich.edu/>

TUTORIAL:
<http://www.lib.umich.edu/ugl/searchpath/index.html>

UM LIBRARY SYSTEM:
<http://www.lib.umich.edu>

THE OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY:
<http://80-dictionary.oed.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/>

12/01/2003 (Mon)



Assignment

EVERYONE post revised outlines of essay 3 to the class discussion board, clearly labeled with your group name/number. Everyone download/printout a copy of each peer group member's outline, and come prepared to discuss it in workshop.

Also bring your revised annotated bibliography, and come prepared to present your findings to/receive suggestions from your peers.

12/03/2003 (Wed)



Assignment

EVERYONE post draft of essay 3 to the class discussion board, clearly labeled with your peer group name/number. Read each of the essays in your group, and come prepared to discuss in workshop. More info to follow.

12/03/2003 (Wed)



Workshop

Small-group workshops

12/08/2003 (Mon)



Workshop

Small-group workshops

12/08/2003 (Mon)



Assignment

Put the finishing touches on your Writing Handbooks, and remember to come up with some useful (and hopefully interesting) way of sharing them with your peers. Think about how you will give your presentation; I suggest a brief overview of the concept, using a few good sections as examples, and then allow your peers to take a few minutes to check it out in the manner they

so choose. Then, you might want to open the floor for questions, or take this opportunity to do some of the exercises you might have included.

We'll also do last thoughts on what we've learned, so do come prepared to look back on what we've read and done.

And last, but not least: the infamous instructor evaluations. Be gentle, I beg! ;)

12/10/2003 (Wed)



Writing Handbook Presentation

Come prepared to present, as a group, your finished writing handbooks. Expect to present for 12 minutes per group.

12/10/2003 (Wed)



Workshop

Full-class workshop on problem areas.

12/17/2003 (Wed)



Final Essay Due

Your final papers are due in my Angell Hall mailbox (3161 AH) by 10:00am, the close of our regularly-scheduled examination period.