
Marketing “America”: Rhetoric, Digital Media, and Social Change in the Age of the Global Brand

ENGLISH 367.01
Winter 2004

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In this course, we will explore the diverse discourses of “marketing” in an increasingly globalized U.S. society. Engaging with a diversity of perspectives (from Marxists to Management Consultants), we will challenge ourselves to think deeply and complexly about the role of “marketing” in American life, resisting simple binaries and easy answers. Some central questions we will consider include:

- 1) How and *why* have American marketing discourses changed or shifted in light of the rise of globalization, postmodern capitalism, social movements, and digital media? What are the cultural and material implications of these shifts?
- 2) What makes marketing discourses persuasive and/or unpersuasive? How can rhetorical and marketing theories help us in answering this question?
- 3) How and *why* have cultural producers and activists satirized, parodied, adapted, or transformed marketing discourses for their own ends? What are the strengths and limitations of appropriating and adapting “marketing discourses” for the purposes of cultural critique and/or social change?
- 4) How can we (as individuals and groups) draw upon marketing practices and theories to create persuasive texts which seek to influence the ideas and/or actions of public audiences?

(Note: I’m sure we will all come to different answers to these questions).

Although we will spend a good deal of time reading and analyzing texts about “marketing,” this course is ultimately centered on writing. Composing both individually and collaboratively in a variety of genres and media, you will use writing as a tool both for analyzing texts and for persuasively communicating your ideas to audiences within the academy and beyond. Recognizing that writing is a process, you will revise your formal assignments in light of teacher and peer feedback (as well as your own evolving perspectives).

In addition to producing traditional word-processed documents, we will also create digital media texts, which persuasively blend images, words, and sounds. Along the way, we will learn basic strategies for manipulating such composing technologies as Adobe Photoshop and Macromedia Flash (as well as numerous tools for facilitating on-line interaction); while no prior technology knowledge is expected, you must be willing to experiment, to play, to research, and to seek help, recognizing that learning a new writing technology is rarely a linear, step-by-step process.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. *No Logo*. (NL) Naomi Klein.
2. *Writing Analytically* (WA), Rosenwasser and Stephen
2. PDF Coursepack (CP), available on CD and on-line.
3. New media texts (links available on WebCT).
4. On-line grammar, style, and technology handouts (available on WebCT)
5. One CD-R or Zip disk.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

On-line Informal Writings: In this course, you will respond in writing to almost all of the readings that you complete. When noted on the syllabus, you will post a reading response (answering a specific prompt) to the WebCT discussion board by noon on the day of class. In evaluating your work, I won't count off for minor grammar and spelling problems, and I recognize that your ideas won't necessarily be perfectly organized and flowing; however, to receive full credit, you must fully address the prompt and demonstrate specific critical engagement with the reading material. WebCT posts will be evaluated holistically at the end of class, but I will email you privately at least twice during the quarter to give you evaluative feedback. If you would like more regular feedback, just email or IM me and I will provide it to you.

Multi-Voiced Analytical Paper: You will write one 15+ page research-supported analytical paper, which will ask you to explore an issue related to marketing in American culture from a variety of perspectives. You will turn in three drafts of this paper, substantially revising your work in response to feedback from your peers and from me.

Digital Campaign (Group): In a group of two to four people, you will create a persuasive digital campaign. For this project, you can choose to persuade a target audience to take a particular action (ex: stop smoking or support a particular public policy). Alternatively, you can create a parodic or satirical marketing campaign, which uses humor to critique the limitations of an already-existing corporate practice or product. In designing your campaign, you will produce a short Flash movie (less than one minute), which integrates images, written text, and sound (voice-overs and/or music). You will also write a project proposal and a reflective essay (outlining your target audience and your strategies for reaching and persuading them). I will work with the class to form groups based on student interest. The time to start thinking of ideas is now!

Final Reflection: At the end of the course, you will write a short 2-3 page reflection on what you have learned during the quarter from readings, discussion, individual writings, and group projects.

Participation: In this course, you will learn as much from your peers as you will from me. Thus, participation is crucial for your own success as well as for the success of the class as a whole. You will be expected to participate in discussions, small group activities, and studio time.

WebCT: In order to have access to our class's WebCT discussions and materials, you must activate your OSU email account and obtain your username and password. The course website can be accessed at class.osu.edu. You will submit some of your papers and projects via WebCT. I will also post notes, handouts, assignments, visual texts, and other things via WebCT. *It is your responsibility to check WebCT frequently to keep up with the course.*

EVALUATION

Your final grade for English 367.01 will be based on:

Informal Writings: 15%

Multivocal Analytical Paper (15+ pages): 45%

Participation: 10%

Digital Campaign (Group): 25%

Final Reflection: 5%

CLASSROOM POLICIES

1. **Attendance:** Your successful completion of this course and development as a writer is dependent on your active and continual attendance. Thus, each unexcused absence (after two) will result in the lowering of your final grade by one-third. Excused absences with documentation (i.e. illness, family tragedy, religious observance, or inter-collegiate athletics) will not affect your grade. **Please note, more than five unexcused absences will automatically result in failure for the course.**
2. **Lateness:** Two late arrivals (more than five minutes) will equal one unexcused absence.
3. **Plagiarism:** When you use another person's words or ideas, you must acknowledge that you have done so (we will review definitions of plagiarism in class). **At no point in the writing process** should words or ideas that are not your own be represented as such. In accordance with university rules, all cases of suspected plagiarism will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.
4. **Student Work:** I expect that all assignments will be handed in on time. Any late assignments will be lowered by one letter grade each day it is late. To receive full credit on a paper, you must turn in each assigned draft and you must also attend any mandatory individual conferences or peer response groups. If you do not complete all required drafts or attend all required meetings, your grade will be lowered one letter.

RESOURCES

The OSU Writing Center is a free service that provides professional consultation/tutoring at any stage of the writing process. You may set up an appointment by calling 688-5865 or by dropping by the center at 485 Mendenhall Labs. The writing center provides an incredibly valuable service for all writers (from undergrads to faculty). I encourage you to visit!

The Writing Programs Ombud, Matthew Cariello, mediates conflicts between teachers and students in 367 and 110. You can contact him at 292-5778 or cariello.1@osu.edu. Walk-in hours for Winter 2004 are Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 1.30 - 4.00; other times are available by appointment. All conversations with the Ombud are strictly confidential.

The Office for Disability Services, located in 150 Pomerene Hall, offers services for students with documented disabilities. Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs.

ASSIGNMENTS AND DAILY SCHEDULE

Note: On most days, we will begin with a 5-10 mini-lecture, Flash Movie, and/or activity focused on writing and visual design skills. I will choose the topics based on student need an interest.

M (1/5) Introduction to the Course

Reading: Syllabus.

W (1/7): The All-Mighty Brand

Reading: NL “New Branded World,” 3-26, WA 24-27, 37-41.

Writing: Reading Response (WebCT).

M (1/12): Marketing Communication: Strategy and Image

Reading: Holt (CP), “What Becomes an Icon Most?”; Ogilvy (CP), “How to Produce Advertising that Sells”; WA, 30-32, 42-59.

Writing: Reading Response (WebCT); invention activity (in-class)

W (1/14): Branding Yourself in the “Free Agent Nation”

Reading: NL, “Alt.Everything,” 73-85 NL, “Threats and Temps,” 231-259; Peters (CP), “The Brand You 50”;

Writing: WebCT posting.

M (1/19): No Class, MLK Holiday

W (1/21): Rhetoric: Analysis and Producton

Reading: WA 78-87, 121-129; Lunsford and Ruskiewicz (CP), “Lines of Argument”

Writing: WebCT Posting

M (1/26): Researching

Reading: Lunsford and Ruskiewicz (CP), “Lines of Argument” (from *Everything’s an Argument*).

Writing: Reading Response (WebCT)

W (1/28): Peer Response / Revising Activity

Due: Beginning of First Draft of Paper #1 (at least five pages)

F (1/30) Completed first draft due by 5PM.

M (2/2): Store Wars: Mega-Brands and the American Dream

Reading: Klein, “Brand Bombing,” 129-141

Wal-Mart and Starbucks Corporate Websites (links on WebCT)

Viewing: “Store Wars”

W (2/4): Behind the Global Brand: Representations and Silences

Reading: Klein, “The Discarded Factory,” 197-229.

Websites TBA (links on WebCT)
Writing: Reading Response (WebCT)

M (2/9): **Editing for Grammar and Style**
Reading: On-line handouts TBA.
Due: Second Draft of Analytical Paper

W (2/11): **Culture Jamming I: Analysis**
Reading: Klein, "Culture Jamming"
Websites TBA (links on WebCT)

M (2/16): **Multimodal Persuasion**
Readings: TBA
Writing: WebCT Posting.

W (2/18): **Culture Jamming II: (Re)Writing in Photoshop**

M (2/23): **Culture Jamming III: (Re)Writing in Flash**
Due: Final Draft of Analytical Paper.

W (2/25): **Studio I**
Work with group and instructor on campaigns.

M (3/1): **Studio II**
Work with group and instructor on campaigns.

W (3/3): **Studio III**
Work with group and instructor on campaigns.

M (3/8): **Studio IV**
Work with group and instructor on campaigns.

W (3/10): **Presentations of Final Projects**
Reading: "Beyond the Brand," 421-437.

F (3/12): **Final reflections due**

