ENGLISH 408B: THE DISCOURSE OF ADVERTISING

Professor Marcel O’Gorman

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  Office Hours: Tuesday, 1:00-3:00 and by appointment  
  course website: http://artsweb.uwaterloo.ca/~marcel/408b

Required Texts

Pricken, Mario. Creative Advertising: Tips and Techniques from the World’s Best Campaigns.

White, Alexander W., The Elements of Graphic Design: Space, Unity, Page Architecture, and Type.

Additional readings will be provided in class and on the course UW-ACE site.

Course Description

This course looks at the discourse of advertising from a critical perspective, and combines theoretical discussions of advertising with the hands-on design of ad campaigns. This course asks students to consider the ethical and existential implications of brand-based marketing and the corporate culture that is responsible for it. That being said, the course will focus as much on "subvertising" (subverting the initial intent of an ad) as it does on advertising. Methods of design and persuasion will be drawn equally from professional advertising firms and from the 'Situationiste internationale,' a revolutionary French group from the 1960s grounded in Marxist ideology. Assignments in this course include an individual poster design project, a photo-essay on subvertising, and a large-scale marketing campaign.

Students in this course will have the privilege of working on a "real-world" viral marketing campaign for the Grand River Film Festival (GRFF). Working in collaboration with Ken Nakaura (GRFF Director) and the GRFF marketing team, you will work in groups to develop a guerilla style campaign.

Your work in this class will be taken very seriously. Your projects will be critiqued in class, and you will be expected to participate in an active, productive critique of your classmates’ work. This is not a class for students who are not prepared to pull their weight in group projects or class discussions. In addition, many of the classes will be conducted like a studio, and students should be prepared to give and take attentive criticism of the work produced on a weekly basis. Slackers beware; you will be graded on the effort you put into in-class exercises as well as "official assignments," and your peers will evaluate your contribution to group work.
Assessment

GRFF Campaign (25%)
Kickstart Posters with Essay (15%)
Kickstart Remix Posters with Essay (30%)
Online Journal/Artist's book (10%)
Quizzes (10%)
Participation & Attendance (10%)

GRFF Campaign :: 25% :: campaign pitch Oct. 2 :: campaign launch Oct. 9 :: Essay Oct. 16
This project involves three components: 1) a web page that links to an event you will be advertising; 2) a viral campaign that uses various media to draw people to your site, and ultimately to the event site; 3) an essay documenting the genesis of your project. Your campaign, which will be designed on the principles outlined in course readings (including theoretical readings) and exercises, must lead the public to your web page. The web page itself will serve as a gateway onto the GRFF Web site. This technique is used so that we can keep track of the number of hits for GRFF generated by your site. You will be graded on the design and effectiveness of your campaign (15%), and the design of your web page (5%). In addition, each student will be responsible for submitting a 3-4-page essay that discusses the project's genesis (10%).

Kickstart Project :: 10% :: first draft Oct 23 :: final draft Oct. 30
Each student will be responsible for developing two advertising posters based on a single product "kickstarted" in class. To create the posters, you must draw on at least one of the techniques described in Mario Pricken's "Kickstart Catalogue." You must also draw on Alexander White's "elements of graphic design." You will discuss your use of Pricken and White's techniques to justify your posters in a 2-3-page essay that will accompany your posters.

Kickstart Remix with Essay :: 30% :: first draft Nov. 13 :: final draft with essay Nov 20
Remix your first kickstart posters, and write an essay of 7-10 pages. Additional details in class.

Online Journal / Artist's Book :: 10%
Each group will be responsible for maintaining a blog in which you will collect interesting ads, document progress on individual and group projects, comment on course readings, and discuss anything else that you see as relevant to the course topic(s). You should try to post at least three times a week, even briefly, and make use of course readings in your discussions.

Quizzes :: 10%
There will be a brief quiz at the beginning of each class for which there is an assigned reading.

Participation / Attendance :: 10%
You will be graded on: participation in class discussions and on the e-mail list; effort put into in-class exercises; general performance in group work. Students will be responsible for providing a critique of group members, which will be used to calculate this grade.
Course Policies

Attendance, Punctuality, and Readiness
Students are expected to attend all lectures/workshops, and to arrive on time. You must complete the readings assigned on the schedule, and bring your textbooks with you to each class. Be prepared to participate in discussions, critique sessions, and in-class exercises. Two percentage points will be removed from your final grade for each missed class without a doctor’s note. Two unexcused missed classes will result in a failing grade for the course.

Submission of Assignments
This course involves the submission of drafts and final assignments. The effort you put into the drafts is directly related to the quality of feedback you will receive, and ultimately, to the quality of your final grade. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day they are due. In special circumstances, you may be asked to submit a text via e-mail, in which case it should be saved as a .rtf document. You might also be asked to submit work at the drop off box near the English Department mail room (HH 229).

Academic Integrity
Maintaining academic integrity involves not only plagiarism and cheating—which will be dealt with very sternly in this course—but also the effort you put into assigned group work. Your willingness to collaborate with others will be a crucial component of this class, and there will be a peer critique component to group work, which could lead to a change in grade for individuals. You should also note that plagiarism in this class could also involve the unjust use of copyrighted images and other graphic material. The Faculty of Arts requires all instructors to incorporate the following note on avoidance of academic offenses:

**Academic Integrity:** in order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm)

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm)

**Appeals:** A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm)
## Course Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading/Discussion</th>
<th>Exercises</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 11</td>
<td>Intro. to course. In-class reading.</td>
<td>Typographical autoportrait. Groups established. Set up Blog.</td>
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<td>Sept. 18</td>
<td>Read Pricken, 40-79, on the &quot;Kickstart&quot; method. Read White, &quot;Section 1: Space.&quot;</td>
<td>Visit from GRFF Marketing Team. Kickstart workshop.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 2</td>
<td>Read White, &quot;Section 2: Unity&quot; Present individual &quot;pitches&quot; for GRFF Campaign</td>
<td>Studio time for GRFF Campaign.</td>
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<td>Oct. 9</td>
<td>Launching of GRFF Campaign. Introduction to Kickstart Project. Read Pricken, 80-125</td>
<td>GRFF Campaign begins. Post comments / photos to blog.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 13</td>
<td>Review of Kickstart Remix Drafts.</td>
<td>Kickstart Remix draft 1 due. Post comments to blog.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 20</td>
<td>Read McQuarrie and Mick, &quot;Figures of Rhetoric in Advertising Language.&quot;</td>
<td>Rhetorical Figures Exercise.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 27</td>
<td>Review of final Remix Projects</td>
<td>Kickstart Remix final due. Post documentation of all projects to blog.</td>
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