Course description:
This course examines the social implications of consumerism and advertising as an economic and cultural force. The course surveys the history of consumer culture and advertising, focusing primarily though not exclusively on the United States and investigates the changing strategies that have been used by advertisers from the 19th to the 21st centuries. It approaches advertisements as texts that indicate the cultural attitudes and norms of their time. This course thus provides a cultural approach to advertising and its history as a means to understand advertising as a central component in capitalist economies and its role as an indicator of cultural attitudes and ideologies. It examines consumer practices, the role that consumerism plays in identity, social trends, and style, and the consequences of a society structured by consumerism.

Course Requirements:
Students are required to attend all lectures, complete the readings, and complete all assignments. Lectures cover more material than the reading and attendance at them will be monitored. If you miss more than 4 lectures without a reasonable excuse, your grade will be lowered.

You should make an effort to meet with me in person at some point in the semester. I am available for consultation via e-mail and for appointments Monday-Thursday. You can schedule an appointment with me by e-mailing.

Website:
We will use two websites in this class. The class Blackboard site will be used for class announcements, assignments, class readings (which will be posted in pdf form under Course Documents), and links to online sources about advertising. We will also use the Department of Media, Culture, and Communication Advertising Archive of print and TV images. This site is http://cultureandcommunication.org/advertising/. The user name is “dcc” and the password is “advertising”

Assignments:
There are two papers, a midterm, and a final exam (which will be cumulative but will concentrate primarily on the second half of the course).
These assignments will be worth the following portion of your grade:

- paper 1 25%
- midterm 20%
- paper 2 30%
- take-home final exam 25%

In addition, strong class participation will enhance your final course grade.

Please type and double-space your written work and number your pages. I recommend you use Chicago style for your citations; the short version is here:
http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html. If you send either of us a document via e-mail, please put your name in the file name and on each numbered page.

**Grading and Evaluation:**

You are responsible for the material covered in lecture and in the reading. You will be evaluated on (1) the level of your engagement with the class materials (as evidenced in your written work and class participation) (2) your capacity to explain your ideas and analysis in articulate and well-written forms (3) and your ability to creatively explore these theories and methodologies.

All of your written work will be graded on two primary evaluative scales (1) how well it demonstrates an understanding of the theories and methodologies of the class (2) how well it structures and articulates its argument.

**Academic Integrity:**

Academic integrity is the guiding principle for all that you do, from taking exams, making oral presentations to writing term papers. It requires that you recognize and acknowledge information derived from others, and take credit only for ideas and work that are yours. You violate the principle of academic integrity when you cheat on an exam, submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from your professors, receive help on a take-home examination that calls for independent work, or plagiarize.

When taking this class, you enter into a contract that states that all the work you are turning in has been your own and no one else’s, and that you have not turned in any work for which you have received credit in another class, and that you have properly cited other people’s work and ideas. Do not take this policy lightly! Violations of this policy will result in a failing grade in the course. If you have questions about these policies, or proper citation of scholarship, please come speak with me in person. (see http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity)

**Student Resources**

- Henry and Lucy Moses Center for students with disabilities (http://www.nyu.edu/csd/)
- Writing Center: 269 Mercer Street, Room 233. Schedule an appointment online at www.rich15.com/nyu/ or just walk-in.
Week 1:

Jan. 24—Introduction

Jan. 26—Origins of the Modern Consumer Society
Reading:
T.J. Jackson Lears, “From Salvation to Self-Realization” pp.3-30.

Week 2:

Jan. 31—The Rise of Modern Advertising
Reading:
Juliann Sivulka, “Selling the Goods” and “The Rise of a Consumer Economy”

Recommended:
Roland Marchand, “Men of the People: The New Professionals” (From *Advertising the American Dream*) pp. 25-38.
Charles Goodrum and Helen Dalrymple, “Cereal, Soap and Sex” From *Advertising in America*

Feb. 2—Spaces for Shopping: The Rise of the Department Store
Reading:
Adam Gopnik, “Under One Roof”
Sharon Zukin, “A Brief History of Shopping”

Recommended:
Jan Whitaker, *Service and Style* (Chapter 4: “Bricks and Mortar” and Chapter 5: Window Shopping)

Week 3:

Feb. 7—Modern Ad Design and Aesthetics
Reading:
Catherine Gudis, “Modern Art and Advertising”

Recommended:
Roland Marchand, “The Consumption Ethic: Strategies of Art and Style” (From *Advertising the American Dream*)

First paper assignment given.
Feb. 9 — Billboards and the Mobile Consumer
Reading:
Catherine Gudis, “The Aesthetics of Speed”

Week 4:

Feb. 14 — The Consolidation of Consumerism in the 1950s
Reading:
Juliann Sivulka, “The Postwar Boom”

Feb. 16 — The Shopping Center and the Mall
Reading:
Lizabeth Cohen, “From Town Center to Shopping Center”
James Farrell, “Designing Malls” from *One Nation Under Goods*

Week 5:

Feb. 21 — The “Creative Revolution” of the 1960s Advertising
Reading:
Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool*, Chapter 1
Thomas Frank, “Advertising as Cultural Criticism: Bill Bernbach versus The Mass Society”

Feb. 23 — Selling Youth Culture and Marketing Coolness
Reading:
Thomas Frank, “Think Young”
Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, *Practices of Looking*, pp. 293-99 (from Chapter 7)
Malcolm Gladwell, “The Cool Hunt”

First Paper Due.

Week 6:

Feb. 28 — Postmodern Advertising
Reading:
Robert Goldman and Stephen Papson, “Yo! Hailing the Alienated Spectator”
March 1 – Commodity Fetishism
Reading:
Karl Marx, “The Fetishism of the Commodity”
Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, *Practices of Looking*, pp. 275-93 (from Chapter 7)

Week 7:

March 6 – Midterm Exam

March 8 – Branding
Reading:
Sarah Banet-Weiser, Introduction: from *Authentic™*
Celia Lury, “The Interface of the Brand”

Recommended:
Marcel Danesi, *Brands*, pp. 7-33

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Week 8:

March 20 – Selling the Nation and the Corporation
Reading:
Marita Sturken, “Consuming Fear and Selling Comfort” (from *Tourists of History*)
Robert Goldman and Stephen Papson, “The Corporate Politics of Sign Values”
Second paper assignment given.

March 22 – Selling Feminism and Empowerment
Reading:
Sarah Banet-Weiser, “Branding Consumer Citizens: Gender and the Emergence of Brand Culture” from *Authentic™*
Week 9:

March 27 – Global Markets and Global Brands
Reading:
Pietra Rivoli, *The Travels of a T-Shirt in the Global Economy* (excerpt)
Rob Walker, “Ignoring the Jones” from *Buying In*
Liz Moor, “National Brands and Global Brands”

March 29 – Selling the Movies: Trailers and Merchandising
Reading:
Jonathan Gray, “Texts That Sell”
Jonathan Gray, “Coming Soon! Hype, Intros and Textual Beginnings”

Week 10:

April 3 – The New Consumerism: Global Capitalism, Wal-Mart, Big Box Stores, and Outsourcing
Reading:
David Bosshart, “The Wal-Martization of Society”

April 5 – The New Consumerism and the Disappearing TV Consumer
Reading:
Devin Leonard, “Nightmare on Madison Avenue”
Rob Walker, “Click” from *Buying In*

Week 11:

April 10 – Viral and Guerilla Marketing
Reading:
Rob Walker, “The Commercialization of ChitChat” from *Buying In*
Second paper due.

April 12 – Product Placement and Consumer Profiling
Reading:
Joseph Turow, “Drawing on the Past” from *Niche Envy*
Mark Andrejevic, “The Work of Being Watched”

Recommended:
Joseph Turow, “The Customized Store” from *Niche Envy*
Week 12:

April 17 – Pharmaceutical Advertising: Selling the New Self
Reading:
Joseph Dumit, “Pharmaceutical Witnessing: Drugs for Life”
Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, *Practices of Looking*, pp. 381-84

April 19 – Environmental Consumer Politics—the “Case” of Bottled Water
Reading:
Andy Opel, “Constructing Purity: Bottled Water and the Commodification of Nature”
John Connell, “The Taste of Paradise”

Recommended:
Elizabeth Royte, *Bottlemania* (excerpt)

Week 13:

April 24 – Ethical Consumerism and Branding Humanitarianism
Reading:
Lisa Ann Richey and Stefano Ponte, “Band Aid to Brand Aid: Celebrity Experts and Expert Celebrities” from *Brand Aid*
Jo Littler, “Cosmopolitan Caring” from *Radical Consumption*

April 26 – Culture Jamming and DIY Culture
Reading:
Rob Walker, “What’s the Matter with Wal-Mart Shoppers” from *Buying In*
Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, *Practices of Looking*, pp. 300-304 (from Chapter 7)
Anne Elizabeth Moore, *Unmarketable* (excerpt)

Recommended:
Kalle Lasn, “Culture Jamming”

Week 14:

May 1 – Alternative Marketing and the New Cultural Entrepreneurs
Reading:
Sarah Banet-Weiser, Branding Creativity: Creative Cities, Street Art, and 'Making Your Name Sing' from *Authentic™*
Richard Laermer and Mark Simmons, *Punk Marketing* (excerpt)

May 3 – Conclusion