

ADVERTISEMENT ANALYSIS (150 PTS)

First Draft Due Tuesday, 11/12

Final Draft Due Thursday, 11/14
(in a two-pocket folder and on BB)

RATIONALE

In the previous paper, you began developing your skills of analyzing the rhetorical strategies used in a piece of persuasive writing. It is now time to use those skills to analyze another kind of text: an advertisement. The 2016 Nielsen Company Total Audience Report found that Americans spend over ten hours a day consuming various forms of media, where we are inundated with thousands of advertisements. Advertisements do more than persuade us to purchase products; they play a significant role in developing and reinforcing all sorts of societal standards—such as gender roles/norms and expectations about body image—as well as influencing our desires, whether we realize it or not. The extent to which desire determines our consciousness is vast, and ads are now an essential part of our existence. Advertisers work hard to get us to desire products and services whether or not we need them; indeed, the difference between “want” and “need” becomes harder to distinguish, especially as ads attempt to convince us that our ability to function successfully in society depends on buying what they’re selling.

Advertisers spend much time and money to develop advertisements that not only sell products but change the way we look at ourselves and our role in the world. However, we as consumers spend very little time considering the strategies advertisers use and just passively consume whatever comes our way, not asking questions. Often, those who do are accused of “reading too much into things” or “over-analyzing.” But in a democratic society, it is essential that we consumer-citizens are informed, equipped with the tools necessary to think critically about the messages we’re being sent and how they are shaping our beliefs about the world in which we live.

YOUR TASK

For this assignment, you will choose one print advertisement and conduct an analysis of the strategies it uses to appeal to its audience. After your introduction, you should have a paragraph that describes the advertisement. You will then analyze everything in the ad—images, words, colors—to determine both its *overlying* and *underlying* messages. **In your paper, you must incorporate at least two quotes from the Jean Kilbourne article “Jesus is a Brand of Jeans” to help develop/support your analysis.**

When conducting your analysis, consider the following questions:

- Who is the intended audience for the ad, and how can you tell?
- What stylistic choices are significant to the ad’s effectiveness?
- What values, assumptions, and beliefs must a person possess for the ad to be effective?
- In what ways does the ad illustrate/represent larger beliefs, ideals, or expectations placed on members of our society?
- In what larger social or cultural conversations does the ad participate?

Be sure to include the vocabulary we’ve learned in class in your paper: rhetorical situation, purpose, audience, context, rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos), etc. Your analysis should demonstrate your understanding of these concepts and your ability to apply them appropriately.

FORMATTING

- ✚ Required page length: 3-4 pages
- ✚ Times New Roman size 12 font
- ✚ Double-spaced
- ✚ One-inch margins all around
- ✚ Your essay must have an **original title**
- ✚ **You must include a printout of your advertisement with your final draft**
- ✚ The first page of your paper should look like the example of a properly-formatted MLA-style document, which can be found here:
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_sample_paper.html

EVALUATION CRITERIA

CONTENT—Does the essay respond thoughtfully to the assignment? Do you clearly and accurately describe the ad before analyzing it? Is your analysis sophisticated, detailed, nuanced, and thorough? Throughout the essay, do you provide concrete examples, evidence, and illustrations from the ad to support the points you make about it? Do you include at least two quotes from Jean Kilbourne to help develop/support your discussion?

ORGANIZATION—How effective is the organization (the order in which information is presented) of your essay? Is all the material that is included, and information that is presented, relevant to the essay's purpose? Are you writing effective transitions and cohesive, coherent paragraphs? How effective are the opening and closing of the essay?

STYLE—Are you successfully maintaining a consistent third-person point of view, which is most appropriate for this kind of analysis? Are your sentences clear and maybe even sophisticated? Do you vary your sentence structures to create interest for the reader? Is your vocabulary precise and mature, avoiding repetition and vagueness? To what extent is your essay free of mechanical errors in spelling, syntax, and punctuation?

SCORING

Your essay will be evaluated according to the following characteristics:

Purpose/Focus (20 pts): The essay's purpose is clear and successfully demonstrates understanding of the assignment's genre (Advertisement Analysis).

Ad Description (20 pts): The paragraph describing the ad is concise, accurate, fair, and evenhanded.

Analysis (60 pts): The analysis is well developed and demonstrates a strong understanding of rhetorical terms and concepts; evidence/examples from the ad are provided in support of analytical claims.

Organization (30 pts): The essay follows a logical organization, with effective transitions and paragraph structures; all included material is relevant to the essay's purpose.

Style (20 pts): Writing is polished and reasonably free from errors that obscure meaning and clarity.