Advertising and Society

Syllabus Spring 2012

Lecturer: Salim Murad
Contact: salim.murad@email.cz
Office hours: before Tuesday class (or by arrangement)

Course description:

The course will include an introduction of the influential sociological theory of consumerism by Zygmunt Bauman. Other theories (see the syllabus below) will be presented as well. After the presentation of the mentioned theories, we will concentrate on their application to the Central European environment, which will be also discussed in the context of globalization. The main aim is to show the relationship between the advertisement and the society in the current phase of society’s development, which can be characterized as a mutual discussion, but a discussion of unequal partners.

In this context we will discuss the impact of current mechanisms of consumer society, which through the advertisement influences issues like i.e.: gender, politics, art and democracy. We will also discuss chosen types of advertisement messages, how they influence the viewer and which ethical problems arise from such an influence.

The issue present in all the classes of the course will be to introduce the students into specifics of Central European region as the area, where we can follow many mechanisms of influencing the society “live”. That is due to only twenty-two years history of having been connected with the world consumer society. Central Europe will be for us in this sense natural laboratory for applications of introduced theories.

Essential parts of the course will be visits of professionals in the field, who will give the students their point of view.

This course is introductory to the topic.

The course is divided into two main areas:

1. Theoretical introduction into the current state of capitalism, condition of consumerism and advertisement
2. Central and Eastern European specifics of delayed consumerism

Learning goals:

Interpretation and application of introduced theories.
Gaining the ability of critical reflection on mutual relation between the society and the world of advertising.
Identification of Central European particularities given by historical experience.

Conditions for completing the course:

Regular attendance (including field trips), study of compulsory reading, active participation, fulfillment of the tasks given – weekly tasks, three assignments, passing of midterm and final test.
No more than two excused absences will be tolerated.
Grading policy – Components of Final Grade

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<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
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<td>Assignments</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>Weekly tasks</td>
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<td>Midterm test</td>
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<td>Final test</td>
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Assignments

Assignment 1: Students are asked to write an essay concerning the differences in consumerism and its symptoms in the U.S. and the Czech Republic. The essay should be grounded in the theories studied during the beginning of the course (1500 words). Deadline for submission: 20 March 2012.

Assignment 2: Students are asked to write a review of the movie "Český sen" (Czech Dream). The review should include an investigation of the Eastern European cultural motifs (700-1000 words). Deadline for submission: 17 April 2012.

Assignment 3: Students are asked to find/take a picture (or other kind of record) of an advertisement with references to Czech culture and write a short justification why they consider this advertisement enrooted in Czech culture. The justification should include the answer to the question: "why this advertisement would be difficult to understand/impossible to understand by individuals from beyond this cultural circle?" (700-1000 words). Deadline for submission: 8 May 2012. Written assignments should be sent to: salim.murad@email.cz and also submitted in hard copy. Fulfilled and handed assignments will be discussed during the class.

Weekly task: students are asked to study obligatory reading and prepare their comments on the text in written form. The comment may include their opinion, ideas, critical views which refer to the reading (200 words). Deadline for submission: Monday before the class. The deadline applies even when the student will not be present during the class.

Schedule of classes

*Week 1:*
Tuesday 14 February
General overview of the course
Explanation of conditions for completing the course

Case study of one concrete “negative” and controversial ad campaign of global company operating on the Czech market. Study of Czech media from summer 2007.

In the library there will be available the book of photographs illustrating Central European esthetics of transition toward market economy (Slovakia case).
verejně otázky.

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**Week 2:**
Tuesday 21 February

**The Central Europe in the net of global capitalism**
Introduction to the current conditions in Central Europe: Transition towards democracy, transition from planned economy towards market economy. Place of Central Europe in current global political and economical environment.

**Reading:**

- **Transnational Practices in the Old Second World - Transnational Advertising and the Spread of Consumerism (Leslie Sklair)**


**Suggested Reading:**


**Suggested movie:**
Viewing of the DVD No Logo by Naomi Klein

**Constructive critique or false activism?**

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**Week 3:**
Tuesday 28 February

**“Consumer culture – easy entrance, no exit” (Zygmunt Bauman)**

**Reading:**

**Suggested Reading:**
Practical exercise: “Memorial of the Unknown Consumer”.

**Week 4:**
Tuesday 6 March

**The Consumer Society**
“We have no other choice but choose“ (Anthony Giddens)
Introduction to Czech works on field of consumer society theories. Brief outline of studies of Jan Keller.

**Reading:**

**Suggested Reading:**

Practical exercise: Experience Czech shopping malls. Visit of the Kotva and Palladium shopping malls.

**Week 5:**
Tuesday 13 March

**Memories of the communism era. The role of desire for symbols of consumer society before 1989. Materialism as the Political Energy of 1989? Spring 2012 in Prague, still time for “Ostalgia”? Pictures of consumption artefacts in former communist Czechoslovakia will be presented. Students photo exercise.**

**Reading:**


**Suggested Reading:**

**Suggested movie:**
Becker Wolfgang, Good Bye Lenin. 2003

**Week 6:**
Tuesday 20 March
Advertising and Pop Art
Triumph of mass production and the power of the brand.

“I shop therefore I am“. (Barbara Kruger)

Assignment 1 (no weekly task)

Presentation of student’s assignments

Reading:

Suggested Reading:

Week 7:
Tuesday 27 March
Midterm test

Ethics of Advertising, Complex of questions connected with advertisement will be discussed. Responsibility (or recklessness) of those involved in producing advertisement and conscious (or non-critical) recipients.

Reading:
Code of Advertising Practice of the Czech Advertising Standards Council. (pp. 1 – 16)

Week 5:
Tuesday 20 March


Suggested Reading:

Practical excercise: Introduction of the Czech commercial culture. The best and worse examples, ad and campaign Czech awards.

Week 8:
Tuesday 3 April
*Ethnic Stereotypes and the Czech Commercial Culture.*

Reading:
Advertising Educational Foundation.

**Suggested Reading:**


**movie:**

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**Week 9:**
*Fall Break – no classes*

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**Week 10:**
*Tuesday 17 April*

**Consumer frustration in Central Europe in 2010, still in place?**
The process of “westernization” of Central and Eastern Europe consumer habits since 1989.

**Reading:**

**Suggested Reading:**

**Assignment 2** (no weekly task)
**Presentation of student’s assignments**

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**Week 11:**
*Tuesday 24 April*

**Visual aspect of advertising and its role and power in society.**

**Practices of Looking: Images, Power, and Politics – Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright**

**Reading:**

**Suggested Reading:**
Aitchinson, J. (2004): *Cutting edge advertising: how to create the world’s best print for brands in...*
the 21st century, Singapore, Prentice Hall. (pp. 22 – 90)

Practical exercise: creating a draft of outdoor campaign for NYU in Prague.

Week 12:
Tuesday 1 May (National Holiday – Make up class will be organized)

Images of Women and Advertising, gender issues, question of stereotyping in advertising in the Czech Republic.

Reading:

Suggested reading:

Examples of advertisement will be presented. (Archive of Department of Culture and Communication Advertising Archive of print and TV images NYU and from lecturer’s archive).

Week 13:
Tuesday 8 May (National Holiday – Make up class will be organized)
Field trip to an Advertising Agency, Prague. How the Czech advertising company does the business on the Czech market.

Assignment 3 (no weekly task)

Reading:

Suggested Reading:

Week 14:
Tuesday 15 May
Consumerism and prospect of democracy. Effect of advertising on democracy. Advertising and Democratic Society or Advertising or Democratic Society?

Reading:

**Suggested reading:**

**Week 15:**
Tuesday 22 May

Presentation of student’s assignments. Final test

**Obligatory literature:**

(All of the below is included in the course reader)


Code of Advertising Practice of the Czech Advertising Standards Council. 2008 (pp. 1 – 16)


In.: *Sign Wars. The Cluttered Landscape of Advertising*. The Guilford Press. New York. (pp. 1 – 19)


**Recommended literature:**


