Instructor: Dr. Elizabeth Preston (epreston@westfield.ma.edu)

Catalog Description
Explores a range of critical perspectives on advertising and consumer culture. Topics may include cultural codes in advertising, advertising and children, and global advertising.

Prerequisite: COMM 0101 Introduction to Mass Communication

Course Description and Outcomes
Issues in Advertising examines the role of advertising in contemporary American culture. The course explores the history of advertising, the development and evolution of the advertising industry in the United States, the crucial role advertising plays in creating and maintaining a consumer culture, and critical theories of advertising as they relate to the social and cultural impact of advertising. The course concludes with an exploration of current issues and controversies in advertising.

Students completing the course should be able to:
- Understand the origins of contemporary consumer culture and the development of advertising in the United States.
- Analyze advertisements as carriers of meaning and ideology.
- Develop a critical approach to engaging with advertisements.
- Understand the relationship between the needs and practices of advertisers and the evolution of media systems and content.
- To formulate and communicate critical observations about advertising’s role within contemporary American society.

Required Text

Additional course materials – both required and optional – will be posted in PLATO (Blackboard).

Course Outline
Unit 1: Introduction; key terms and concepts
Unit 2: Capitalism, consumer culture, and the origins of advertising
Unit 3: Modern advertising
Unit 4: The digital era and new millennium
Unit 5: The future of advertising
Unit 6: Cool
Unit 7: Authenticity
Unit 8: Representation and advertising
Unit 9: Children and advertising
Unit 10: Food, health and advertising
Unit 11: Advertising pharmaceuticals
Unit 12: Advertising and the natural world