



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

Wu, T. (2016). *The Attention Merchants: The Epic Scramble to Get Inside Our Heads*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

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