

**Write:**

Vast amounts of time, money and creativity are spent on advertising. Were you aware that so much effort went into advertising? Why do you think so much time, money and creativity is spent on advertising? If so much is invested in advertising why do you think we sometimes dismiss advertising as irrelevant?

**Project:**

Sut Jhally says that advertising has colonized not only our space but also our lives – it is inside our heads, our relationships, our identities. The example he uses is the role the diamond engagement ring now plays in our love relationships. “A diamond is forever” is no longer just an ad slogan, it frames how we think about and act out engagement and marriage.

» Find another example to illustrate this same point; an example of how advertising has leached out from its role as mouthpiece for the selling of products to mouthpiece for how we should think, interact, live. This may take quite some reflection. When advertising infiltrates the culture in this way its job is to influence our desires in a way that makes us think they are precisely that – our desires. It is difficult to separate advertising from culture because advertising becomes culture, but it is your mission to try to do just that!

» Present your example to the class. Using a poster and/or video clips analyze real advertisements to illustrate how the example you’ve chosen has infiltrated our culture to such a degree that the line between advertising and culture becomes blurred.

**Write:**

What happens to important societal issues in a culture where advertising acts as the main storyteller? Explain.

**Project:**

Advertising talks about our individual needs and desires not about the things we have to negotiate collectively like poverty, health care, housing, the homeless, and the environment, or does it? Do you think advertising sometimes addresses these concerns if they think it will sell more products? One example may be auto ads in which a car or SUV is presented in a beautiful natural setting, or presented as being like a wild animal. In the ad the automobile is presented as being one with nature and wilderness, ignoring the fact that pollution from auto-use is actually a major source of environmental pollution and destruction. In this assignment you are asked to seek out ads that seem to address societal issues in this way. Choose a few of these ads to create a poster for presentation. Your presentation should include a critical analysis of each ad. For each analysis consider the following:

- » How has the advertiser linked its product to a particular social issue?
- » Why have they done this?
- » Does this linkage mean that the advertiser is now talking to us as a society rather than as an individual?
- » Does this linkage in anyway trivialize the social issues important to us or does it mean that the advertiser cares about these issues too?
- » Why do advertisers spend money trying to look like they care about social issues?
- » How else could that money be spent?

**Write:**

The results of changes we make to the way we live now, will probably not be felt until many years from now and it is possible that we may even be dead when their full effects are felt. Even if the world is going to end in chaos and despair we probably won't be around to live through it so why should we care? Do we care? Give evidence to explain.

**Project:**

Jhally says that the methods used by advertisers to sell products have changed since the early days of advertising and that these methods will continue to change as advertisers devise new ways to compete with clutter and noise. The present-orientated nature of advertising will increase as advertisers speak more to our bodies than to our heads, our feelings rather than our thoughts. Consider this 1768 ad placed by Paul Revere in the *Boston Gazette*:

Whereas many persons are so unfortunate as to lose their Fore-Teeth by Accident, and otherways, to their great Detriment, not only in Looks, but Speaking both in Public and Private: – This is to inform all such, that they may have them re-placed with false Ones, that look as well as the Natural, and Answers the End of Speaking to all Intents, by PAUL REVERE, Goldsmith, near the Head of Dr. Clarke's Wharf, Boston (Presbrey 157).

Compared to modern advertising, this is an extremely informative and rational advertisement, rather than an appeal to the passions (Postman 60). How are today's advertisements different?

Now think about the future of advertising. Many corporations are shifting their budgets from television advertising to online advertising, especially small companies. Why might they be motivated to do this? What are the benefits of online advertising on sites such as Google and Facebook?

- » Create a poster, using poster board or a large sheet of paper, to visually map the world of advertising chronologically.
- » Be sure to point out what has changed, as well as what, if anything, has stayed the same.
- » Why should we care, and is there any action we should take that would be beneficial?

The following website may be helpful:  
<http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/ea/>

**Write:**

Advertising seems to be about trivial things so it is often easy to dismiss it as unimportant. Can we afford to dismiss advertising as trivial? Give evidence to support your own arguments.

**Project:**

What can we do about advertising and American consumption? One strategy is the promotion of a “Buy Nothing Day” which is scheduled to occur yearly on the same day as Black Friday. Advertisements are run encouraging consumers not to purchase anything on that day (some stations have refused to run these ads). Is this an effective strategy? Design your own strategy and be prepared to present it to the class.

All Groups:

**Project:**

According to the video advertising draws us away from what really makes us happy – the social elements of life, and pushes us towards what doesn't – things. What would advertising look like if it did push us towards what really makes us happy? Could an ad answer the question, "How do we become happy?" with some aspect of the social elements of life? If an ad is not selling us anything that we can actually buy is it still an ad? Or is it perhaps a spoof-ad?

This assignment asks you to create an ad that is not actually selling anything but is instead answering the question of how we become happy truthfully. Be creative.

- » To begin, ask yourself "how do I become happy?"
- » Make a short list of your answers.
- » Choose one answer, one thing that makes you happy, to base your ad on.
- » Remember to keep your objective in mind: to answer the question "How do we become happy?" truthfully.

The following web site might help you get started:

**<http://www.adbusters.org/gallery/spoofads>**