HU2820 Communication and Culture
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Required texts

Rationale
Consumer culture dominates contemporary existence in the Western world. The readings in this course will show you how consumption and communication are bound together. We will look at advertising, McDonaldization, and globalization as sites of culture, consumption, and communication. The course will offer conceptual resources for understanding the power of communication as a part of and a resistance to consumer culture.

Objectives
1. to understand the concept of consumer culture
2. to learn and use tools of critical textual analysis
3. to critically reflect on the implications of consumer culture

Requirements
• You must complete all the assignments listed below for a final grade or make arrangements with me to complete missing assignments.
• Plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of Students; I expect careful documentation of any sources, especially electronic sources.
• Please attend class; after two (2) absences, your grade will be lowered.

I encourage you to see me regarding any particular aspect of your involvement in the course. In addition, accommodations will be made for particular needs in accord with the following university policy statement: “MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students (2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department head, or the Affirmative Action office (3310).”

Grading
2 quizzes (10% each); 2 papers (20% each); 2 presentations (#1 =20% & #2 = 10%); participation (10%)

Assignments
Quiz: on Berger, chapters 1-4; Presentation #1: analysis of a print ad or tv commercial; Paper #1: your own ad or a commercial with a rationale based on Berger

Quiz: on Ritzer, chap. 1; Presentation #2: assigned chapter; Paper #2: McDonaldization
Participation grade is based on my assessment of the quality and consistency of the following...
1. listening in class
2. asking and answering questions in class in relevant and thoughtful ways
3. reading the book
4. taking the assignments seriously
5. talking on task and productively in groups
6. turning in careful work that shows you spent time and effort
7. responding thoughtfully to written comments
8. asking for help with your work
9. expressing opinions and disagreement in respectful and intelligent ways

Schedule
5/17 Course introduction
5/18 Berger, chapter 1, Advertising in American Society
5/19 Berger, chapter 2, Consumer cultures
5/20 Berger, chapter 3, Communication
5/24 Berger, chapter 4, Control, alienation, and ethics
5/25 Quiz, chapters 1-4; assign paper #1 and presentation #1
5/26 Berger, chapter 5, Sexuality and in advertising
5/27 Berger, chapter 6, Politics and in advertising
5/31 Berger, chapter 7, Marketing and audiences
6/1 Berger, chapter 8, Analyzing print ads
6/2 Berger, chapter 9, Analyzing tv commercials
6/3 Workshop on paper #1
6/7 Presentation #1
6/8 Presentation #1
6/9 Ritzer, chapter 1, Introduction to McDonaldization
6/10 Quiz, chapter 1; assign presentation #2 and paper #2
6/14 Ritzer, chapter 2, History of McDonaldization
6/15 Ritzer, chapter 3, Efficiency; chapter 4, Calculability
6/16 Ritzer, chapter 5, Predictability; chapter 6, Control
6/17 Ritzer, chapter 7, Irrationality of Rationality; chapter 8, Globalization
6/21 Ritzer, chapter 9, Limits; chapter 10, A Practical Guide
6/22 Workshop on paper #2
6/23 Discussion of McDonaldization
6/24 Informal presentation of paper #2