

VISS 599, Spring 2020
Selling the Story: Commercial Pictures and Visual Persuasion
Jennifer Greenhill and Vanessa R. Schwartz
Wednesdays, 2-5pm, Taper Hall 308

Professor Jennifer Greenhill

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

As pictures became a central feature of the advertising message in the second half of the nineteenth century, they migrated from the pages of newspapers and magazines, and the posters on the sides of buildings, to such technologies as electrical spectaculars, film, and later, television. At the heart of this diffusion was an effort to make the pictorial sales message migrate not only across media but also into the minds of consumers.

This seminar explores the relationship between the material frameworks of picture-based selling and the immaterial, subjective fictions they were designed to activate. We offer a historically grounded approach to the visual operations and social effects of picture-based advertising (broadly conceived) in and between the U.S. and Europe since the nineteenth century and also consider historical practices that relate to contemporary ad techniques. The class is fundamentally interdisciplinary and will offer work in a variety of fields such as art history, business history, illustration and graphic design, marketing and consumer research, behavioral psychology, literature, and communication and media studies.

This class fulfills one of the requirements for the VSGC.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: To raise and answer the following questions:

- How were people expected to interact with visual layouts and displays in specific material frameworks and social situations?
- Who were the commercial agents behind these processes, e.g. advertising agencies, consumer research consultants, corporate marketing departments, magazine publishers, industrial and graphic designers, photographers and filmmakers, etc?
- What place did technology, art theory, scientific research, and models of corporate organization have in the development of particular pictorial techniques?
- When did priorities other than immediate sales—such as storytelling about a firm or product or community-building—complicate short-term economic concerns?

Readings and Seminar Participation: Readings are extensive. Our primary task as individuals is to read with care. As a group, our goal is to engage in a discussion that helps illuminate the readings. Seminar participation will be considered an essential component of the class.

Expectations and Requirements: Students are expected to complete all required reading prior to seminar meetings and to discuss the texts and critical issues at hand during each session. Readings are in a class Dropbox rather than on the Blackboard. Each student must also post a “response” to the week’s readings on the class website by no later than 5 am Wednesday morning, although earlier posts are welcomed. Students are also expected to read each other’s responses before class and thus we may need to adjust the deadline for submission based on the needs of the group. A response can be a critical summary of the readings, a series of questions, complaints, rants. The idea behind them is to ask each student to take some time to reflect on the week’s readings and to share those thoughts with the class before we meet as a starting point for discussion, which we will organize and lead.

Additionally, during the first six weeks of class, we will have a “research report” by one or two students (ten minutes each), in which they share research sources (digital or otherwise) for further development. The idea here is that each student will spend a few hours looking at available sources, sharing those with the class, and then posting a “report” after class to the website. One example is a dive into this source: <https://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/hartman>

Special Events and Lectures: As part of this seminar, you are expected to attend at least three special events held outside class time sponsored by the VSRI, but it is preferable that you attend them all.

Grading:

Weekly Posts: 20%

Seminar: 30%

Final paper: 40%

Contribution to VSRI activities: 10%

Schedule of VSRI Activities: * denotes Commercial Pictures theme

Co-sponsored event

Wednesday, January 15, 2020

6:00 pm – 8:00pm

Screening Race in American Nontheatrical Film (Duke University Press, 2019): a screening and discussion

SCA 110

Overlooked by most narratives of American cinema, the volume *Screening Race in American Nontheatrical Film* adds to the growing study of nontheatrical films by focusing on the ways filmmakers developed and audiences encountered ideas about race, identity, politics, and community outside the borders of theatrical cinema. Join us for an evening of screenings and discussion, featuring educational and sponsored films from USC’s own archives.

*Selling the Story: Commercial Pictures and Visual Persuasion.

Wednesday, January 29

2-3:30pm

VISS 599 Seminar Visit: *Work!*

Elspeth H. Brown, Professor of History, University of Toronto

SOS 250

*USC-LACMA History of Photography Seminar

Thursday, January 30

7-8:30pm; reception to follow

Book Talk: *Work! A Queer History of Modeling*

Elspeth H. Brown, Professor of History, University of Toronto

Respondent: Alexis Bard Johnson, Curator, ONE Archives at the USC Libraries

ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives at the USC Libraries

VSGC

Wednesday, February 5

12:30-2:00pm

Graduate Student Research Round-Up: Research Tips and Techniques

SOS 250

USC-LACMA History of Photography Seminar

Tuesday, February 25

6-7:30pm

Gordon Parks: *The New Tide: Early Work 1940-1950*

Philip Brookman, Consulting Curator, Department of Photographs, National Gallery of Art

Santa Monica, address provided with RSVP

*Selling the Story: Commercial Pictures and Visual Persuasion

March 11

2-5pm
Workshop: Persuasion and American Images
Organized by VSRI Postdoc, Ellen Macfarlane
THH 309K

*Selling the Story: Commercial Pictures and Visual Persuasion
April 1
2-3:30pm
VISS 599 Seminar Visit: Container Corporation's Art Direction
Alex J. Taylor, University of Pittsburgh
SOS 250

*Selling the Story: Commercial Pictures and Visual Persuasion
April 8
2-3:30pm
VISS 599 Seminar Visit: Background Artist: Art and Immigration in the Life and Work of Tyrus Wong
Karen Fang, Professor, Department of English, University of Houston
SOS 250

VSGC: Anne Friedberg Memorial Lecture
April 15
12:30-2:00pm
The Alternative Transnational: Migration, Media and the "Bridge-Work" of Malayalam Soft-Porn
Darshana Mini, Ph.D. Candidate, Cinema and Media Studies, USC
SOS 250

*Selling the Story: Commercial Pictures and Visual Persuasion
April 15
2-3:30pm
VISS 599 Seminar Visit: How do advertising pictures persuade?
Barbara Phillips, Rawlco Editor and Professor of Marketing, University of Saskatchewan
SOS 250

EMSI Visual and Material Culture: Big Paper Seminar
April 17
9am-4pm
April 18
9am-12:30pm
Conference: Big Paper: Large Designs in the Renaissance
Huntington Library, Smith Board Room

VSRI Lecture
April 20
12:30-2:00pm
The Rhythm of Hearts: Time in City Symphony
Ori Levin, Tel Aviv University, VSRI Post-Doctoral Fellow
Respondent: Partice Petro: UC Santa Barbara
SOS 250

SCHEDULE

Seminars and Reading

PART I: OPERATING ASSUMPTIONS

Jan. 15: commodity fetishism: READ FOR FIRST CLASS AND POST COMMENTS

Karl Marx, "The Fetishism of the Commodity and Its Secret" in *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, v.1 (1867).

<https://artandcritique.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/KM1867.pdf>

- "Life Goes to a Party with a New York café socialite named Cynthia," *Life* (December 13, 1937): 84-7.
<https://books.google.com/books?id=oT8EAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA84&lpg=PA84&dq=life+goes+to+a+party+with+cynthia&source=bl&ots=mgs5gHduayC&sig=ACFu3U34xooDGzElpWpAWrP5Y7eHCBB6Sw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjoze2sqa7mAhUQsZ4KHZaTACgQ6AEwEXoECAoQAg#v=onepage&q=life%20goes%20to%20a%20party%20with%20cynthia&f=false>
- Jennifer Marshall, "Clean Cuts: Proctor & Gamble's Depression-Era Soap-Carving Contests," *Winterthur Portfolio* 42 (Spring 2008): 51-76.
- Roland Barthes, "Saponids and Detergents and Depth Advertising" in *Mythologies* (1957).
- Watch "Maidenform," episode 6, season 2 of "Mad Men" (2008).

For further consideration:

- Marshall McLuhan, "Ads: Keeping Upset with the Joneses" in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964).
- Raymond Williams, "Advertising: The Magic System" in *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (1980).

Jan. 22: the individual and the crowd

- Walter Lippman, *Public Opinion* (1922), 3-34 and 79-104:
<https://archive.org/stream/publicopinionoolippgoog#page/n12/mode/2up>
- Edward Bernays, chs. 1, 3, 4 in *Propaganda* (1928).
- Michael J. Golec, "Utility, Luxury, and Projection: Affect and Cognition in T.M. Cleland's Advertising Illustration," book chapter manuscript.
- Harriman and Lucaites, Introduction, *The Public Image: Photography and Civic Spectatorship* (2016).
- Brenna Wynn Greer, Introduction, chs. 2 and 5 in *Represented: The Black Imagemakers Who Reimagined African American Citizenship* (2019), 1-16, 56-109, 197-247.

For further consideration:

- Gustave le Bon, book 1, chs 1-2 and book 2 in *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (1895).
- Walter Dill Scott, chs 9-14 in *The Theory and Practice of Advertising: A Simple Exposition of the Principles of Psychology in Their Relation to Successful Advertising* (1904).
- Michael Warner, chs 1, 4 in *Publics and Counterpublics* (2002).

Research report 1: newspaper ads

Jan 29: desire and affect (Elspeth Brown visit)

- Elspeth Brown, *Work! A Queer History of Modeling* (2019).
- Winthrop Sargeant, "A Woman Entering a Taxi in the Rain," *New Yorker* (November 8, 1958):
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1958/11/08/a-woman-entering-a-taxi-in-the-rain>
- Screen: *Diana Vreeland: The Eye has to Travel* (2011)

For further consideration:

- Vince Aletti, *Issues: A History of Photography in Fashion Magazines* (2019).
- Rebecca C. Tuite, *1950s in Vogue* (2019).
- Paul Martineau et al., *Icons of Style: A Century of Fashion Photography* (2018).
- *The World in Vogue* (1963).

Research report 2: posters

Feb 5: psychotechnics

- Sigmund Freud, "The Dream-Work" (1900), in Schwartz and Przyblyski, eds., *The Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture Reader* (2004), 47-50.
- Patricia Johnston, "Subtle Manipulations: The Persuasion of Realism" in *Real Fantasies: Edward Steichen's Advertising Photography* (1997), 72-104.
- Jeremy Blatter, "Screening the Psychological Laboratory: Hugo Münsterberg, Psychotechnics, and the Cinema, 1892-1916," *Science in Context* 28 (2015): 53-76.
- Allan Langdale, "S(t)imulation of Mind: The Film Theory of Hugo Münsterberg" in *Munsterberg on Film: The Photoplay: A Psychological Study and Other Writings* (2002), 1-41.
- Vance Packard, *The Hidden Persuaders* (1957).

For further consideration:

- Charles Acland, *Swift Viewing: The Popular Life of Subliminal Influence* (2012).
- Mark B.N. Hansen, "From Fixed to Fluid: Material-Mental Images Between Neural Synchronization and Computational Mediation" in Jacques Khalip and Robert Mitchell, eds., *Releasing the Image: From Literature to New Media* (2011), 83-111.

Research report 3: ads in film

Feb 12: no class (professors at College Art Association conference).

PART II: TECHNOLOGIES OF SELLING

Feb 19: brands, logos, trademarks (Jennifer Black virtual visit to class)

- Susan Strasser, "The Name on the Label" in *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market* (1989), 29-57.
- Jennifer M. Black "The Mark of Honor: Trademark Law, Goodwill, and the Early Branding Strategies of National Biscuit" in *We Are What We Sell: How Advertising Shapes American Life...and Always Has* (2014).
- Jennifer M. Black, book chapter manuscript on mid 19th century newspaper display ads (title tbd).
- Frederic J. Schwartz, "Commodity Signs: Peter Behrens, the AEG, and the Trademark," *Journal of Design History* 9: 3 (1996): 153-84.
- Anthony E. Grudin, "'A Sign of Good Taste': Andy Warhol and the Rise of Brand Image Advertising," *Oxford Art Journal* 33: 2 (2010): 211-32.
- Consult J. Walter Thompson advertising agency, *The Thompson Blue Book of Advertising* (1904): <https://repository.duke.edu/dc/aaa/Q0012>

Research report 4: jingles

Feb 26: signage, windows (Anca Lasc virtual visit to class)

- Anat Rosenberg, "Ways of Seeing Advertising: A Cultural Legal History of the Hoarding in Britain, 1860-1914," book chapter manuscript.
- Matthews, "The Pictorial Poster" in *Century Illustrated Magazine*, September, 1892
- "Le Courier Français, Géraudel Cough Drops, and Advertising as Art" pp. 205-219 in Hahn, *Scenes of Parisian Modernity*
- William Leach, ch 2, "Facades of Color, Glass, and Light" in *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture* (1993).
- Louisa Iarocci, *Introduction in Visual Merchandising: The Image of Selling* (2019), 1-18.
- Anca I. Lasc, "The Traveling Sidewalk: The Mobile Architecture of American Shop Windows at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," *Journal of Design History* 31 (February 2018): 24-45.
- Anca I. Lasc, "The Power of Windows: Artistic Interventions in the Commercial World," book chapter manuscript.

For further consideration:

- Emily Orr, *Designing the Department Store: Display and Retail and the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (2019).
- Tag Gronberg, ch 3, "La boutique and the face of modern Paris," and ch 4, "The Art of the shop window" in *Designs on Modernity: Exhibiting the City in 1920s Paris* (1998).
- Charlotte Klöck, "Patterns of Attention: From Shop Windows to Gallery Rooms in Early Twentieth-Century Berlin," *Art History* 28 (September 2005): 468-96.
- Sandra Zalman, "The art of window display: Cross-promotion at Bonwit Teller and MoMA," in Anca I. Lasc, Patricia Lara-Betancourt, and Margaret Maile Petty, eds., *Architectures of Display: Department Stores and Modern Retail* (2018).

- Sara K. Schneider, *Vital Mummies: Performance Design and the Store-Window Mannequin* (1995).

Research report 5: multimedia signage (such as electrical spectaculars)

March 4: slogans, stories (WWII case study)

- James J. Kimble, Lester C. Olson, "Visual Rhetoric Representing Rosie the Riveter: Myth and Misconception in J. Howard Miller's *We Can Do It!* Poster," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 9 (Winter 2006): 533-69.
- James J. Kimble, "Enduring Ideals: Rockwell, Roosevelt, & The Four Freedoms" in *Enduring Ideals: Rockwell, Roosevelt & The Four Freedoms* (2019), 29-53.
- Lester C. Olson, "Public Interactions with Norman Rockwell's Four Freedoms, Then & Now" in *Enduring Ideals: Rockwell, Roosevelt & The Four Freedoms*, exh cat (2019), 213-29.
- Jennifer A. Greenhill, "How To Make It as a Mainstream Magazine Illustrator, or J.C. Leyendecker and Norman Rockwell Go To War," *Winterthur Portfolio* 52 (Winter 2018): 209-252.
- Daniel Harris, chapters on "Cuteness" and "Quaintness" in *Cute, Quaint, Hungry and Romantic: The Aesthetics of Consumerism* (2000), 1-50.

For further consideration:

- Inger L. Stole, *Advertising at War: Business, Consumers, and Government in the 1940s* (2012).

March 11: Workshop: Persuasion and American Images

Organized by Ellen Macfarlane, VSRI Mellon Postdoctoral Scholar

This workshop brings together scholars of American visual culture to present new research in the area of visual persuasion. Exploring illustration, painting, and photography in artistic and commercial contexts, the workshop is an effort to critically evaluate the role of historical images in influencing public opinion and belief. The papers consider issues including labor and visibility, national identity, and public persona to explore how different forms of media have been enlisted to narrate knowledge for an American public.

Lauren Kroiz (History of Art Department, University of California, Berkeley)

"Living Laundry Soaps: Unruly Animation and Invisible Labor in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Advertising Trade Cards (1891-1893)"

Cara Finnegan (Department of Communication, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)

"The Candid Camera Presidents: Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt"

Sally Stein (Professor of Art History, emerita, UCI), "For Love or Money? Gisèle Freund's Paradoxical Turn From Her Chromophobic, Marxist Study of The Rise of 19th-century Photography in France to her Pioneering Pursuit of Photographic Portraiture in Color."

Final paper proposals due on Tuesday, March 10.

March 18: no class (spring break)

March 25: lights, animation and other novelties: Visit by Dydia DeLyser

- Wendy Woloson, "Selling Weird Stuff to American Consumers in the Industrial Age," book chapter manuscript.
- Darcy Tell, ch 2 in *Times Square Spectacular: Lighting Up Broadway* (2007), 24-59.
- Christopher Ribbat, *Flickering Light: A History of Neon* (2013), **selections to be determined.**
- Additional selected readings by Dydia DeLyser

PART III: ADVERTISING'S MANY FUTURES

April 1: Branding the corporation (Alex Taylor visit)

- Alex J. Taylor, *Forms of Persuasion: Art and Business in the 1960s*, book manuscript.
- Richard K. Popp, "Picturing a Knowledge Economy: The Time-Life Exhibition Center and 1960s Corporate Modernism," book chapter manuscript.

For further consideration:

- Alfred D. Chandler Jr., *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (1993).

- Roland Marchand, *Creating the Corporate Soul: The Rise of Public Relations and Corporate Imagery in American Big Business* (1998).
- Monica E. Jovanovich and Melissa Renn, eds, essays by Jennifer Greenhill, Alex Taylor, and others in *Corporate Patronage of Art & Architecture in the United States, Late 19th Century to the Present* (2019).

April 8 (Passover) special time, 12:30-3:20: Tyrus Wong at Hallmark and Disney (Karen Fang visit)

- Horowitz, "Was Hollywood Too Jewish" *Tablet*: <https://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-arts-and-culture/books/242464/was-hollywood-too-jewish-jack-warner-biography>
- Neal Gabler, *Introduction, An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood* (1989).
- *Moguls and Movie Stars*, episode 3, Turner Classic Movies documentary (2010).
https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B01DMTCKCQ/ref=atv_dp_cnc_3_2
- Karen Fang, *Background Artist: Art and Immigration in the Life and Work of Tyrus Wong*, book manuscript.

April 15: Consumer research (Barbara Phillips visit)

- Barbara J. Phillips, "Spokes-characters: Assurance, Insurance, and Advice for Marketers" in Stephen Brown and Sharon Ponsonby-McCabe's *Brand Mascots and Other Marketing Animals*, Oxford, UK: Routledge (2014), 165-174.
- Edward F. McQuarrie and Barbara J. Phillips "Indirect Persuasion in Advertising: How Consumers Process Metaphors Presented in Pictures and Words," *Journal of Advertising*, 34: 2 (2005): 7-21.
- Barbara J. Phillips and Edward F. McQuarrie, "Narrative and Persuasion in Fashion Advertising," *Journal of Consumer Research* 37 (October 2010): 368-92.
- Barbara J. Phillips, Edward F. McQuarrie, and W. Glenn Griffin, "How Visual Brand Identity Shapes Consumer Response," *Psychology & Marketing* 31: 3 (2014): 225-236.

April 22: advertising as art exhibition (Rebecca Morse visit)

Morse (Curator, Wallis Annenberg Photography Department, LACMA) to discuss forthcoming exhibition, *Objects of Desire*

- read her exhibition proposal
- McLuhan, Marshall. *The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of the Industrial Man*.
- Douglas, Crimp. *Pictures*. Exh. cat. Artists Space, September 24 - October 29, 1977
- Optional: consult exhibition catalogues of previous exhibitions on advertising and commercial pictures in the US, France, and elsewhere, on reserve, including *High and Low: Modern Art and Popular Culture*, MoMA, 1990, and *Art & Pub*, Centre Georges Pompidou, 1991.

April 29: presentations

FINAL PROJECT: ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN CASE STUDY: Students will each choose a single ad campaign, a genre of advertising, or a single advertising motif or artist and write a twenty-page paper on it. Students must use primary sources and focus on the visual dimension of advertising.

Final project due: May 8, 10 am

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

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Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

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suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

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Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

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studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

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Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

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Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

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dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

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USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

