

## Writing Project One: Critical Analysis of a Visual Text

For our first formal writing assignment, we will flex our analytical muscles. Our focus is on one of the most ubiquitous forms of persuasion in our culture: the advertisement. Researchers for Google speculate that the average American sees 3000 ads a day; how many of them impact you without you even being aware of their presence? Most advertisements are sophisticated rhetorical texts, with millions of dollars spent on their construction and social implementation. How thorough can you be in deconstructing one of these visual/verbal manipulations?

Your assignment:

**Write a thorough rhetorical and visual analysis of a print advertisement.**

Like traditional texts (newspaper articles, essays, books, etc.) visual "texts" contain messages, argue positions, and urge viewers toward certain actions. The authors of your textbook, in fact, have devoted an entire chapter to "reading" and interpreting visual texts. Using the tools and interpretive strategies in chapter 11 of your textbook, you must dissect, interpret, and clearly explain the rhetorical strategies of a particular print advertisement supplied to you in class.

Key Terms:

- **Analysis**, according to your textbook, "means to divide or dissolve the whole into its constituent parts, to examine these parts carefully, to look at the relationships among them, and then to use this understanding of the parts to better understand the whole--how it functions, what it means" (285).
- **Rhetorical analysis** focuses on the specific persuasive choices the author of the text has made. Why has the ad's creator made these particular decisions (in terms of the ad's words and visuals)? How do the advertisers hope these decisions will influence the target audience? How do you know who the target audience is? Think about the text itself (the ad), but also the context.

Additional requirements:

You must include a **Works Cited page** at the end of your written analysis. It must be done in MLA style (see examples of this citation style in our textbook's Chapter Eleven). As usual, all of your drafts must be typed, double-spaced, use Times New Roman 12 point font, and be accessible in Microsoft Word (.doc or .rtf). Please use one-inch margins on all pages.

**Minimum length for your analysis: 3 typed pages, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font, with 1" margins**

First Draft due: Wednesday, July 13

Final Draft due: Friday, July 15 (must be submitted online in Blackboard)

Writing Project Three Grading Criteria

- **Clear and appropriate description of the ad:** Does this draft effectively describe key features of the ad? Does the description allow readers to visualize the ad? Are all elements of the descriptions relevant and sufficiently discussed in the body of the essay?
- **Textual rhetorical analysis:** Does this draft thoroughly analyze the internal content of this ad? This includes the visual/verbal elements, their arrangement, the colors, the rhetorical appeals employed, etc.
- **Contextual rhetorical analysis:** Does this draft thoroughly analyze the context of this ad? This includes the location where the ad was published, the company/product being advertised, the target audience, etc.
- **Content organization:** Do the transitions and organization of this draft help readers focus upon and understand the author's analysis of this advertisement? How effective is the draft's introduction? How effective is the draft's conclusion?
- **Manuscript preparation:** Has the writer polished the final draft carefully, addressing audience expectations and college-level academic writing conventions?
- **MLA citation style:** Has this draft demonstrated that the author knows how to accurately use MLA citation style, both within the body of the essay and on the Works Cited page?