



APPLIES TO ACADEMIC YEAR 2006/2007

MRK 9620 Culture and Media Analysis

Program

Bachelor in Market Communication (3. year), Bachelor in Public Relations (3. year)

Responsible for the course

Berit von der Lippe, Gerhard E Schjelderup

Department

Communication - Culture and Languages

Term

According to study plan

ECTS Credits

6

Objective

The objective of this course is to provide students with an understanding of cultural approaches to different media texts or media genres. The main focus will be on the socio-cultural context of which any text is a part and within which it is interpreted. The main focus will be: How does one try to obtain our attention? What kinds of tools does one make use of? What values are transmitted? What is to be found "behind" the surface of images/words we hear, see and read?

In order to make this type of texts function at all, and thus communicate successfully with potential consumers, viewers and listeners, they must, as it were, form part of a specific dialogue with the cultural context in which they appear, i.e. with "what is already known". Advertising will dominate the analysis, although it will be important to make manifest the close links these texts have to other genres, e.g. news, entertainment etc. The students will be provided with an insight into how different disciplines - semiotics, rhetoric, narratology hermeneutics, and discourse analysis - function as a tool that throws light on:

- the structuring of various media texts
- how/why they are interpreted the way they are
- how they communicate with the cultural setting or with target groups

Understanding or reading the culture that we all belong to helps to extend our cultural understanding and perhaps also make some students more creative in terms of various forms and strategies of communication. The above mentioned disciplines provide us with good analytical tools for such an understanding.

Prerequisites

The course is based on the Foundation Program in Marketing Communication

Compulsory literature

Books:

Frønes, Ivar. 2001. Handling, kultur og mening. Bergen : Fagbokforl

Gripsrud, J. 2002. Mediekultur, mediesamfunn. 2. utg. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget. s. 107-227.

Collection of articles:

Artikler publisert på Blackboard

Recommended literature

Books:

Jensen, J. F., T.A. Rasmussen og J. Stigel, red. 1993. Reklame - kultur. Aalborg: Aalborg Universitetsforlag

Course outline

- Advertising in a semiotic/rhetorical perspective
- Media texts and the cultural context
- Cultural production, news, advertising and propaganda
- Advertising and political marketing
- Semiotics and communication through pictures from a management perspective
- Popular film genres, dominant cultural expressions of men and women, seeing the similarities

between advertising and other mass media expressions in general, including political rhetoric.

Computer-based tools

Computer-based tools are not used.

Course structure

The course is based on 36 hours of lectures. For students enrolled in the NMH module-based program there are less lecture hours. Semiotics, rhetorics, hermeneutics and narratology are to a large extent different from other theories with which students are more familiar, since within these disciplines it is necessary to look behind the symbols or to describe symbols that we often take for granted and believe we understand. Here we are concerned with the ambiguity rather than the unambiguous meaning of symbols, primarily as regards verbal language and figurative language.

The introduction to semiotic and cultural symbol analysis is important and covers the first 10 hours of lectures. Rhetoric, or the attempt to convince and persuade through words and pictures is essential not only during the introduction but throughout the course. There will be a focus on the cultural context to which any symbol belongs. Therefore the cultural theoretical perspective will form an important element in the subsequent lectures. Parallels and comparisons with political rhetoric and advertising rhetoric are included to illustrate differences and similarities between the two types of rhetorical messages. Real texts and advertisements form part of the teaching, partly in order to put semiotics in concrete terms and partly as a basis for student activities. Students are encouraged to form discussion groups from the very start of the course.

The last 10 hours of teaching include a further examination of purely semiotic and cultural theoretical aspects; these are placed in a marketing context based on cases focusing on an international perspective. In the course of the semester students will be given assignments and are encouraged to present "the finished product" to their fellow students during class.

Evaluation

A term paper to be completed within one week concludes the course. It can be written individually or in groups of up to 3 students.

Evaluation code(s)

MRK 96201 - term paper, which counts 100% of the grade in MRK 9620, 6 credits.

Aids at the examination

All aids are allowed

Makeup exam

A re-sit is normally held at the next regular exam.