



APPLIES TO ACADEMIC YEAR 2013/2014

MRK 3566 Consumer sociology and cultural analysis

Programme

Bachelor of Market Communication (2. year)

Responsible for the course

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Department

Department of Marketing

Term

According to study plan

ECTS Credits

7,5

Language of instruction

Norwegian

Introduction

The aim of the course is to give the students an understanding of consumer sociology, advertising and the rhetoric of advertising. This means partly to understand different sociological models for explaining consumption, and partly to understand the wider cultural context. Consumption and advertising deal with certain aspects of communication; the consumer wants to communicate his identity, and advertising communicates the consumer's assumed values about himself. The course will also discuss political rhetoric in relation to advertising. The question of what we define as advertising or not is important to get a deeper understanding of the concept of advertising as such, especially related to political rhetoric.

The course will also address how different cultures create specific challenges for the rhetoric of advertising with regard to appeal to potential consumers in different countries with different cultural background. The course will have a global perspective as well as a national/western perspective where comparative analysis of different rhetorical strategies of advertising will be included. Since male and female consumers have a slightly different pattern of consumption, the course will also discuss gender.

All in all, this course will enable the students, through analytical tools, to understand the context of communication, especially with regard to consumer behaviour.

Learning outcome

Acquired knowledge

The student should acquire knowledge about the different models within consumer sociology to explain behaviour, its history of ideas, a general sociological way of thinking and different perspectives of consumer

behaviour, especially power, gender, identity and ethics.
The student will also be provided with knowledge of different tools for analyzing culture – especially rhetoric. The knowledge of rhetoric as persuasion, the history of rhetoric, the theory and application are central in this course. The student shall also have knowledge of the basics of semiotics (signs), narrative theory and the theory of discourse (the study of language and systems of language)

Acquired skills

The student should be able to use the theory of consumer sociology in order to understand, explain and predict consumer behaviour and to decide advertising and communication aimed at specific target groups with specific emphasis on tools for segmentation.
The student should be able to use comparative cultural analysis and tools for understanding culture to analyze advertising and communication within a given cultural context and between different cultural contexts. The student's ability to use the theory of rhetoric in order to communicate in a better way will be stressed.

Reflection

The student should be able to reflect upon the ethical challenges of communication and reflect critically upon the culture of consumption at the present time.

Prerequisites

MRK 3414 or MRK 2914 Marketing and MRK 3480 or MRK 2980 Consumer Behaviour or equal prerequisites.

Compulsory reading

Books:

Kjeldsen, Jens. 2009. Retorikk i vår tid : en innføring i moderne retorisk teori. 2. utg. Spartacus. 396 sider
Schjelderup, Gerhard Emil og Morten W. Knudsen, red. 2007. Forbrukersosiologi : makt, tegn og mening i forbrukersamfunnet. Cappelen akademisk forlag

Recommended reading

Course outline

- Introduction to consumer sociology – the history of ideas of consumption, the development of consumption as such and an introduction to the theory of sociology
- Different perspectives of consumption including power, identity, gender and ethics
- Rhetoric as an apt form of communication with emphasis on persuasion and good ethics
- Argumentation, genre, style and rhetorical criticism
- The history of rhetoric and different practical aspects such as oral presentation, body language and written text.
- Additional perspectives such as semiotics, hermeneutics and narrative theory

Computer-based tools

None required for this course.

Learning process and workload

The course will consist of 40 hours that will combine lectures, group discussions and feedback on material handed in for the course. The group discussions will consist of problem-solving and discussions based upon the central elements of the curriculum. The group discussions will be conducted in class and between classes and will be managed by the lecturer responsible for the course. It is expected that the students participate in an active manner in class and between classes.

During the term the students shall work on two small assignments. The assignments are compulsory and should be handed in according to schedule. There will be class feedback related to the assignments. The assignments must be approved in order for the student to take exam in the course. The assignments could be solved individually or in groups up to 3 students

The course will be concluded with a one-week term paper in groups and an individual exam at school.

Suggested use of hours:

Activity	Use of hours
Class participation and group discussions	40
Preparation for class	90
Assignments	30
Exams	40
Total	200

Use of hours

Coursework requirements

In order to pass the course the students must pass two assignments solved either individually or in groups. Feedback on the assignments will be given in class, and the assignments will also be discussed in class.

Examination

The coursework requirements must be approved in order to take the exam.

Part 1: A Term paper for one week, solved either individually or in groups up to three students. Counts 40% of the total grade in the course.

Part 2: An individual written exam of 3 hours. Counts 60 % of the total grade in the course

Examination code(s)

MRK 35661 Term paper, accounts for 40 % of the grade in the course MRK 3566 7.5 ECTS credits

MRK 35662 Individual written exam, accounts for 60 % of the grade in the course MRK 3566 7.5 ECTS credits

Examination support materials

Term paper: All support materials are allowed

Written exam: All written support materials are allowed.

Re-sit examination

Re-sit is offered every term.

The students that do not meet the coursework requirements will not be allowed to sit for the exam. This means they will have to take the whole course at a later time.

Students that fail the written exam or term paper or who wish to improve their grade, can re-take the examination in connection with the next scheduled examination.

This course will be lectured for the last time spring 2014. Re-sit exam will be offered autumn 2014 and last time spring 2015.

Additional information