

Group Exercise #5: Advertisements as Arguments and Cultural Symbols

Over the last week, we have explored advertisements through the lens of our critical thinking class. I made the argument that advertisements contain cultural frameworks that both mark their context as well as attempt to influence them. Your reading in "From Rosie to Lucy" also discusses advertisements (and other cultural media) and their influence on societies. This exercise is designed to test your critical-thinking skills when reading the world around you—in the seemingly mundane aspects of our everyday lives.

Members of Group _____

Directions: Before we meet for this group exercise, you should scour magazines and bring in at least one print advertisement. Before you meet with your group, answer the first two questions. As a group, address the remaining questions. At the end of your group discussions, we will reconvene as a class and present our advertisements.

1. In what magazine did you find your advertisement? What are the demographics of the magazine?

2. What is the advertisement selling? Is it a consumer ad or a political ad? What kinds of techniques does the advertisement employ? How / why did it catch your attention? Is symbolism used in the ad? Text? Color?

3. As a group talk about your advertisements. Each student should take time to present their ad and the kinds of appeals used by the advertisers.

4. Does the advertisement use any kinds of rhetorical appeals? (appeal to emotions, recognition of counterargument, appeal to authority of the speaker, etc.)?

5. As a group, choose one of the advertisements to present to the rest of the class and prepare a statement about its use of emotional appeals and the ways in which it relies on particular cultural frameworks to sell its point (ie: gender, race, class). Why does the advertisement "work"? Or does it? Explain
