

Essay #1: Commodification, Capitalism, and Consumer Culture

Rough Draft Due: 2/28/17 (in class)

Final Draft Due: 3/2/17 (via Safe Assignments)

Assignment:

Choose a visual advertisement from a magazine or online and perform a semiotic analysis of it. Consider the following questions: Why am I being shown this or being told that? What are the implicit messages at work in this advertisement and how are they similar to/different from the explicit messages? How do the characters in the ad function as signs? What other signs appear in the ad? What sort of people *don't* appear as characters? Why? What cultural myths are invoked in this ad? To what purpose?

You must have a strong, arguable thesis in which you state what you believe to be the implicit messages communicated through the signs presented in the ad. Include plenty of support for your position by analyzing the signs in the ad itself and by supplementing your argument with ideas from one of the assigned essays from *Signs of Life*. You are expected to cite all sources, so be sure to take careful notes and to refer to the "Citing Sources" section in *Signs of Life* for guidance. You should plan on providing a brief summary of the topic you are writing on and a vivid description of the advertisement; this should be given in your introduction. The rest of your paper should be dedicated to supporting your thesis through careful semiotic analysis.

Requirements:

- Length: 750 words, minimum
- Follow MLA formatting guidelines (use the handout provided on OpenLab and the sample student essays in *Signs of Life*)
- Include at least one citation from *Signs of Life*