

Creative Thinking for Advertising



Faculty Contact Information

Name:

Email:

Office Hour information:

Course Information

Course Description

'Rules are what the artist breaks; the memorable never emerged from a formula' (Bill Bernbach). Breaking rules in ad campaigns rarely survives research. So the creative artist in advertising has to bend them or at a minimum be a great salesman – convincing the client of the commercial wisdom of doing something that's never been done before.

The course has a split perspective. Part of it provides a window on the concepts and grammar of creativity; the other part is 'how to' oriented: imparting skills in drawing up creative strategy and in delivering creative solutions.

The course starts by unpacking creativity at large, mapping what it means to be original, innovative, experimental, radical, and provocative. High-end creative art is compared with creativity in advertising – typically viewed as 'second-tier' by virtue of being subjugated to sales/selling or by way of being strategy compromised and hence Ogilvy + Mather's mantra: 'If it doesn't sell, it isn't creative'.

But once selling is seen to be about offering ideas and images rather than artefacts the alleged substantive difference between art-creative and ad-creative becomes blurred.

A further key in the course is that innovation in conventional art forms – from movies to painting – is over and advertising is the replacement avant-garde. Protected by regulations and ring-fenced by research it's easy for advertising to be provocative. But – the course will ask – is shock cheap creative? Is being offensive cheap surprise? What sort of creative do marketing managements really want?

Both successful and disastrous UK campaigns are deconstructed. This analysis – along with attending to the advice of some of the great ad practitioners from Bill Bernbach to David Ogilvy – yields a raft of tips, hints, guides, and methods for originating and communicating ideas that affect consumer behaviour.

Finally, the course looks at that most demanding of creative tasks: the speculative pitch.

Course Goals

By the end of the course students have a sound understanding of the range of creative approaches in advertising communications, and of the value of different forms and styles of creative practice. In addition, students have appreciation of the tools and techniques to interpret ad briefs.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will:

1. Solve advertising problems through the discipline of creative thinking and subsequent application of the cogitation
2. Deconstruct and critically appraise ad campaigns from a creative point-of-view
3. Critique the overall creative art that distinguishes high-end advertising

Course Assignments, Grading, and Assessment

Assignment	Percentage	Grading Requirements
Attendance and Participation	20%	
Reflective Journals	10%	Please see rubric on MyStudy
Individual Presentation	20%	Please see rubric on MyStudy
Group Presentation: Pitch	25%	Please see rubric on MyStudy
Group Presentation: Client role	5%	Please see rubric on MyStudy
Research Paper	20%	Please see rubric on MyStudy

Brief Assessment Overview

Assessment 1: Reflective Journals

Due:

A 250-word journal on a field visit and on a co-curricular activity.

Assessment 2: Individual Presentation

Due:

Students source two ads drawn from any medium – print, TV, web, mail shot, packaging, et al., and identify and appraise the ad objectives. In a 15-minute presentation, each student then unpacks the ad strategy underlying each text with the deconstruct covering the promise/proposition, the appeals being used, and the tone or ‘voice’ along with personal views on whether the ads are effective or otherwise.

Assessment 3: Group Presentation

Due:

The class is divided into groups and each group, effectively playing the role of a short-listed ad agency, presents – as if to prospective client’s marketing management – a creative strategy following which it pitches creative proposals: ideas and rough executions.

For each 'agency' speculative presentation another group is designated to role play the prospective client – providing a rationale for buying or rejecting the proposals.

Assessment 4: Research Paper

Due:

Adopting a research format, papers must be 3,000 words.

Grading

Grade	Knowledge & Content	Methodology & Structure, Language & Style	Understanding, Reflection & Critique	Integrative thinking & demonstration of experiential learning
A (93- 100%) A- (90-92%)	Interesting topic handled with intelligence, originality, and depth; wealth of supporting material, smoothly integrated into the text; tone is evident and maintained throughout; no factual inaccuracies	Material is unified and well focused; organization is clear, logical and purposeful throughout the essay; well-chosen examples. Uses sophisticated sentences effectively; usually chooses words aptly; observes conventions of written English and manuscript format; makes few minor or technical errors	Well-chosen examples; persuasive reasoning used to develop and support thesis consistently: uses quotations and citations effectively; causal connections between ideas are evident	Gives full insight into the nature of an event, experience, or artifact; achieves complete integration of knowledge from diverse disciplines to interpret an issue. Shows clear understanding of cultural impact through appropriate examples
B+ (87-89%) B (83-86%) B- (80-82%)	Content is above average; worthwhile topic; satisfactory depth of development; supporting details for the thesis and topic sentences are specific, concrete, and plentiful; has only minor factual inaccuracies	Material is unified and well focused; pattern of organization is clear, logical, and well executed; makes an effort to organize paragraphs topically. Some mechanical difficulties or stylistic problems; may make occasional problematic word choices or awkward syntax errors; a few spelling or punctuation errors or cliché; usually presents quotations effectively	Pursues thesis consistently: develops a main argument with clear major points and appropriate textual evidence and supporting detail; makes an effort to organize paragraphs topically	Gives some insights into the nature of an event, experience, or artifact; achieves partial integration of knowledge from diverse disciplines to interpret an issue; some understanding of cultural impact through appropriate examples
C+ (77-79%) C (73-76%) C- (70-72%)	Worthwhile topic; supporting material for thesis and topic sentences is general and abstract rather than specific and concrete; most information is correct	Organization is clear, logical, and coherent; some ideas unsupported; fails to integrate quotations appropriately. More frequent wordiness; several unclear or awkward sentences;	Only partially develops the argument; shallow analysis; some ideas and generalizations undeveloped or unsupported; makes limited use of textual evidence; fails to	Able to explain to a limited extent, the quality of a performance, event, or artifact; gives few insights into event, experience; discusses few qualities of an experience; a limited understanding of

		imprecise use of words or over-reliance on passive voice; one or two major grammatical errors	integrate quotations appropriately	cultural impact with few examples
D (60-69%)	Trivial subject; very few supporting details for the thesis and topic sentences; has some correct & incorrect information	Not logically organized; digresses from one topic to another; no clear organizational pattern. Some major grammatical or proofreading errors (subject-verb agreement; sentence fragments); language marred by clichés	Frequently only narrates; digresses from one topic to another without developing ideas or terms; makes insufficient or awkward use of textual evidence	Little integration of experience and narrative; limited insight of issues and insufficient understanding of cultural impact
F (0-59%)	Consists of unsupported generalities and/or the repetition of commonplace ideas; lacks originality and insight; information is inaccurate or absent	Does not follow the instructions; rambling, disorganized and incoherent. Numerous grammatical errors	Little or no development; may list incorrect facts or misinformation; uses no quotations or fails to cite sources or plagiarizes	Little or no integration experience and narrative; lack of insight and fails to understand cultural impact

Policies specific to this course

- **Co-curricular Activities and Field Trips:** Field trips for your FIE courses have been planned to help students achieve the learning objectives of the course and are required. They take place during class time unless otherwise noted. Details about required visits appear on the class by class schedule below. Please note that any make up for missed co-curricular activities are at the personal expense of the student.
- **Late submission of work:** Written work may be submitted later than the due date only with express permission from the faculty. Credit is not given for work received late, except in exceptional circumstances of personal illness or similar (which must be made known to FIE at the time). Documentation of exceptional circumstances from a third party, such as a doctor's note, may be required. Any extensions made beyond the last class meeting must be committed to writing and include information on the exceptional circumstances that require the extension, the nature of work yet to be submitted, and the date by which the work will be received. If said work is not received by the agreed extension date, barring further exceptional circumstances, the work will not be given credit.
- **Late arrivals to class or site visit:** Please arrive on time. Lateness, particularly on days with co-curricular visits, results in missed course material. Faculty may use their discretion to mark a student as 'Absent' if they feel the student has arrived too late or left too early to be considered 'Present' for that session.
- **Trigger Warnings:** Some topics covered in class may expose students to past traumas and evoke a negative reaction. Sensitive topics can vary, such as sexual violence, death, racism, or xenophobia. I want this to be an inclusive space where every student feels comfortable; therefore, I will provide content warnings before lectures for sensitive subject matters. Content warnings are meant to give students a forewarning so they can prepare for their emotional safety. It is important to note that anything in the environment could be a trigger for someone's trauma, such as smell, sound, or texture; it is impossible to account for all

possible triggers, and ask for grace as I do my best as an educator to warn students of potentially distressing content during lectures, assignments and/or discussions.

Attendance and Participation

- Regular attendance is essential in order to pass a course. A class constitutes lectures, student presentations, discussions, seminars, co-curricular activities, tests, and examinations. In addition, under UK Home Office regulations class attendance is mandatory.
- Class attendance and participation is formally recorded and incorporated into a student's final grade.
- In addition to physical presence in class, a student's participation in a class is evaluated on the mastery of assigned course readings as reflected in a consistent, valid contribution to class discussions, in-class exercises, and in asking questions that enrich the on-going discourse. Consistency and validity in participation is expected in every class. Limited participation will have a negative impact on a student's participation score.
- When unexpected events cause students to miss a class, it is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with the faculty member to notify them in advance, or as soon as is reasonably possible.
- Absence from class does not relieve a student of responsibility for assignments. Students bear the ultimate responsibility for all missed class material and assessment.
- If a student misses 25% or more of a course, then they may be awarded a failure for the course and/or not permitted to finish the course.
- [See the full attendance policy here](#)

Required Readings

The course does not slavishly track a single 'biblical' text as there is no one work that encapsulates the material to be covered. Moreover, a significant number of topics and approaches date quickly. All classes are supported by soft- and hard-copy handouts and illustrated with A/V ad material.

Additional Resources and Readings

Berger, J. *Ways of Seeing*. BBC & Penguin Books

A dazzling exploration of the language of publicity in works of art and ad images; especially the notion of glamour and how creative in both forms speaks only of the past and of an endlessly deferred future but never of the present.

Steel, J. (2007). *Perfect Pitch: The art of selling ideas and winning new business*. John Wiley

Brilliant anatomy of why most presentations fail, of London's winning bid for the 2012 Olympics and of the bravura creative thinking behind the 'Got Milk' campaign.

Ogilvy, D. (2010). *Confessions of an Advertising Man*. Southbank

A distillation of the tactics and techniques & other 'how to' advice from 'The Pope of Advertising'.

Ogilvy, D. *Ogilvy on Advertising*. Pan Books

More insights – from 'Good ideas come from the unconscious' to imperatives: 'Make the product the hero'.

Sullivan, L. (2003). *Hey, Whipple, Squeeze This: A Guide to Creating Great Ads*. John Wiley

Hegarty, J. (2011). *Hegarty on Advertising: Turning Intelligence into Magic*. Thames & Hudson

(part) How-To guide from co-founder of BBH ground-breaking campaigns for Levis, Audi, Xbox, Lynx (Axe), Barnardo's and BA's 'Aviator'. Appraisal of why so many great campaigns are based on storytelling – the most powerful form of communication.

Kessels/Kramer. *Advertising for People Who Don't like Advertising*.

Laurence King Advocates one of advertising's last unexploited resources: Honesty

It is strongly recommended to look at trade publications: Creative Review Campaign Admap

Useful websites include:

www.AdBrands.net On-line weekly showcasing 4 favourite 'Ads of the Week' plus updates on account moves and synopses of other major advertising and marketing news.

www.asa.org.uk Explains how the UK Advertising Standards Authority regulates via a voluntary code all non-broadcast advertising in the UK plus its final adjudication role re: viewer complaints about UK commercials.

www.ofcom.org.uk Regulator and competition authority for UK communications industries with responsibility for TV and Radio.

www.adrants.com For ad chat & gossip. Quirkily interesting, too, is AdTurds: an irreverent blog that reviews 'stinkers'.

www.brandrepublic.com Access to ad industry trade titles.

www.visit4ads For viewing and downloading ads including reviews of the latest spots featured in Campaign.

www.clearcast.co.uk An NGO certifying TV ads for code compliance prior to transmission.

MyStudy@FIE

MyStudy@FIE is FIE's virtual learning environment based on the open-source platform Moodle. Students are required to access MyStudy@FIE for course information, readings, link to resources, assignment submissions and communication with faculty.

FIE's Values in the Curriculum

A unique aspect to FIE's curriculum is our courses reflect an engagement with values of 1) knowledge and inclusivity, 2) ethics and human rights, 3) social and cultural engagement, and 4) sustainability. For information about each of these values and how each of FIE's courses aligns with them, please see [Our Values](#).

Topics

- Key characteristics of advertising culture; art as advertising and advertising as art; cross-traffic between feature film directing and making commercials.
- The commercial as a micro-movie versus a selling vehicle. The currency of branded entertainment; product as the protagonist.
- Is the broadcast spot on death row? Creative challenges of writing screenplays for brands; the evolution of the webvert or filmad.
- The role of ad regulations and controls in stimulating out-of-the-box thinking. Operation of Clearcast and the ASA. Are codes necessary?
- Research and drawing up creative strategy; testing new ideas: is research the enemy of creative?
- Understanding/evaluating shockvertising. Does it sell? Assessing shock to sell awareness and attitude change in PSAs and charity/cause campaigns.
- Creative media strategy: from innovation in qualitative factors to interactive challenges and the theatre of flashmobbing pioneered by Saatchi & Saatchi for T-Mobile. Production-driven creative: CGI versus in-camera; stop-frame animation potential. Use of music: the jingle – customising versus appropriation; sonic design signatures; lyric endorsement.
- Speculative presentations: pitching for new accounts; political campaigns and speeches.
- Campaign objectives and budget parameters. Understanding and interpreting creative and media strategy

Possible co-curricular activities

- Visits to museums such as the Transport Museum, Saatchi Gallery, Museum of Brands, TATE Modern, Victoria & Albert Museum
- Field trip to locations such as Piccadilly Circus to see creative advertising in action

Academic Integrity

By enrolling at FIE, you have joined an academic community and you are expected and required to act honestly regarding the work you submit for assessment in your courses. Academic integrity is closely related to the concept of good academic practice.

Any attempts to Cheat; Fabricate; Plagiarise; Collaborate without Authorisation; Participate in Academically Dishonest Activities; and/or Facilitate Academic Dishonesty will be viewed as a breach of this regulation.

[Please see FIE's Academic Integrity Policy in full.](#)

Most students do not have any problems understanding the rules and expectations about acting honestly at university. If you have any questions you must talk to your faculty or a member of FIE's Academic Team.

Writing and Language Support

FIE's Writing Support Tutors are available to assist students of all levels of expertise with all phases of the writing process. Available year-round and to all students. To book an appointment or for more information visit www.fie.org.uk/wst.

Please note that FIE allows the use of a foreign language/English dictionary in exam situations for students where English is not their primary language UNLESS the use of the dictionary would give the student a significant advantage (e.g. where the exam is aimed at getting the students to define terms that might be found in the dictionary).

Accommodations for Students

Students who wish to use academic accommodations at FIE can register to do so via FIE's Administration Team, by providing the appropriate supporting documentation. Students who have approved FIE academic accommodations should discuss them directly with their faculty member(s) within or around the first few class sessions, or via email. Exams are facilitated by FIE faculty and students should give 2 weeks' notice to faculty members if use of approved exam accommodations is required. The Administration team can assist students and faculty with liaison and facilitation as needed.

Additional Policies and Resources

Mental Health and Stress Management Support

FIE's qualified and accredited counsellor is Dr Deborah Hill, who offers appointments via video call and over the phone. The first three appointments are free of charge and ongoing sessions can be arranged directly with Dr Hill. To make an appointment with Dr Hill, simply email studentlife@fie.org.uk.

If you have a counsellor from back home that you are seeing, we strongly encourage you to maintain contact with them throughout your time studying abroad with FIE.

Diversity and Inclusivity

FIE regards its housing and classroom facilities as safe spaces to live, study, and work with students, faculty, and staff who are understanding, supportive, and trustworthy. Inappropriate, derogatory comments and/or actions, harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination are not tolerated. Any such behaviour will be investigated and dealt with appropriately. Students must be respectful of diverse opinions and of all class members regardless of personal attribute and use inclusive language in written and oral work.