

Creative Thinking for Advertising

Faculty Contact Information

Name:

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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

Alternative formats of the FIE Grading Rubric are available in the Student Resources area of MyStudy@FIE.

	Relevance Questions are interpreted correctly; Argument/thesis is clear and developed throughout; Discussion is focused on topic of the questions; Irrelevant content and discussion are not included	Knowledge and Understanding Recommended literature and/or research guidelines are used and interpreted appropriately; Selection and use of evidence shows understanding and insight; There is evidence of study beyond the recommended literature and that introduced in the module	Analysis, Critical Thinking and Integration of Experiential Learning Approach shows evidence of analysis and independent reasoning; Originality in argument; Evidence of critical insight and reasoned questioning of assumptions; Integration of connections and experiences outside of the formal classroom	Scholarship and Style Conclusions are well justified and complete; Facts reported and statements made are accurate; Writing is clear and fluent; All sources are appropriate, accurately acknowledged and formatted in recognised style; All work is the student's own
A 93-100 %	Totally appropriate interpretation and relevant; Excellent and thorough thesis development	Comprehensive understanding and mastery of core evidence and extensive wider reading	Excellent analytical skills, outstanding evaluation of evidence, independent and original critical insight; Meaningfully integrates experiential learning where appropriate	Exceptional fluency and accurate writing using appropriate language, conclusions are well-justified; Accurate and thorough referencing

A- 90-92%	Almost wholly appropriate interpretation and relevant; Very strong thesis	Very strong understanding of evidence and clear evidence of appropriate wider reading	Well-developed analytical skills, excellent evaluation of evidence, shows strong critical insight; Effectively integrates experiential learning where appropriate	Almost wholly accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language, conclusions are full and justified; Accurate referencing
B+ 87-89%	Appropriate interpretation and relevant; Good thesis throughout	Strong understanding of evidence and appropriate wider reading	Very good analytical skills, strong evaluation of evidence; Shows critical insight; Acknowledges and compares experiential learning and other perspectives	Largely accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language; conclusions are justified; Accurate referencing
B 83-86%	Largely appropriate interpretation and relevant; Thesis is clear	Good understanding of evidence and some appropriate wider reading	Good analytical skills, good evaluation of evidence; Shows critical insight; Acknowledges and compares experiential learning and other perspectives	Largely accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language; Conclusions are justified; Accurate referencing
B- 80-82%	Mostly appropriate interpretation and relevant; Thesis is underdeveloped but clear	Sound understanding of evidence and some wider reading	Sound analytical skills; Sound evaluation of data; Shows some critical judgement identifies	Sound level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language; Conclusions are coherent;

			experiential connections	Sound use of referencing conventions
C+ 77-79%	Some appropriate interpretation and relevant; Thesis is underdeveloped and lacks clarity	Evidence is largely understood and some wider reading	Sometimes inconsistent analytical skills; Some evaluation of data; Shows some critical judgement though often descriptive; Identifies experiential connections	Sound level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language; Conclusions are coherent but not fully supported; Sound use of referencing conventions
C 73-76%	May contain some misinterpretation and/or irrelevant material; Thesis lacks clarity	Evidence is largely understood; Limited reading beyond material introduced in module	Mostly inconsistent analytical skills; Some evaluation of data; Scant critical judgement mostly descriptive; Identifies experiential connections	Some level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language; Conclusions are coherent but not fully supported; Sound use of referencing conventions
C- 70-72%	Limited interpretation and relevance; Thesis is inconsistent	Weak understanding of evidence; Limited reading beyond material introduced in module	Mostly inconsistent analytical skills; Some evaluation of data; Lacks critical judgement; Little integration experiential learning	Inconsistent written fluency; Weak use of appropriate language; Weak justification for conclusions; Adequate use of referencing conventions

D 60-69%	Limited interpretation and relevance; Lacks thesis	Weak understanding of evidence and limited, inappropriate wider reading	Inconsistent and weak analytical skills, poor evaluation of evidence, lacks critical insight; Little integration of experiential learning	Inconsistent written fluency; No justification for conclusions; Inaccurate use of referencing
F 0-59%	Significant misinterpretation and irrelevant material	Lacks understanding of evidence and inappropriate or no wider reading	Lacks analytical skills, lacks evaluation of evidence, lacks critical judgement; Lacks integration of experiential learning	Poorly written with little fluency; No justification for conclusions; Poor referencing; Evidence of plagiarism or inappropriate use of AI

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 notes. 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 in advance of the due date from the course instructor. Late work will receive a 5% reduction in points for each 24-hour period handed in past the deadline, including each weekend day. Work submitted a week late will be marked at a C or lower. Any extensions made beyond the last class meeting must be requested in writing to the faculty and include any information on the 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 verses 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 offers mental health support. If students wish to seek this support, including with FIE's counsellor, 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.