



COM 300 Exam II Developing a print ad for Ikea

“Appreciate my uniqueness, but treat me the same.”
--Keith Woods, Poynter Institute

Your mission: Design, however crudely, one print magazine ad for Ikea that targets U.S. Muslims. You choose the product or item (<http://www.ikea.com/us/en/>). You decide really everything, such as whether the ad is seasonal or not, or whether it is tied to an event or holiday. You choose the typography, the dominant visual, the ad copy – everything.

Your one-page ad will appear in airline in-flight magazines, such as Delta’s Sky (<http://deltaskymag.delta.com/>) or United’s Hemisphere (note the use of Helvetica: <http://www.hemispheresmagazine.com/>).

You can work alone or in groups, but know that something like this outside the Bubble would be done by a creative team. One grade will be assigned to all of any one group’s members.

The visual exquisiteness of your design, of your ad, is **not the point** here. Use whatever media you are comfortable with to communicate your ideas. I will be grading the ideas, the conceptual, the work that went into developing the message, not your proficiency with, for example, Illustrator or InDesign.

You will **submit:**

- a finished mock-up
- any elaboration I might need to understand what is signified (such as, identifiers of color if the ad is penciled, or just what the dominant visual is supposed to be; remember, I’ll be alone with your work when I’m grading it)
- narrative rationales covering the six grade criteria below (a few paragraphs each). Type up and print out any written work.

Due date: Monday, April 12

The six grading criteria (do they look familiar?):

PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE: Does the ad work? Is it (or would it be) effective? Or is it flawed? Does it break down? Bottom line: Will it sell chairs (or beds, or whatever it is the ad is designed to sell)? What does the ad denote? Connote? What story does it tell?

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: Do you consider or take into account contemporary events and sensitivities, like 9/11, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan? Do you respect the long and rich history of Islam globally? Does the ad adopt or leverage a specific style popular in print advertising, such as cigarette advertising in the 1930s or Apple's i-series popular now?

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE: How salient is the ad to U.S. Muslim populations? In other words, how does it speak uniquely to U.S. Muslims compared to anyone else, everyone else?

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE: What is present at a semiotic level? What symbols are used, to what effect? Which symbols are avoided or absent? How much thought went into the ad's symbolism or semiotic meaning?

TECHNICAL PERSPECTIVE: This is a print ad, and any medium is an intrinsic part of the message. How does the ad acknowledge the message that is part of any **print** ad (as opposed to TV or Web)? How effective is the typography? The dominant visual? Color? Light?

ETHICAL PERSPECTIVE: Did you avoid stereotype? Did you demonstrate sensitivity, cultural knowledge, care and respect for the audience? Did you treat everyone the same but acknowledge their uniqueness? Does the ad take a Golden Mean and/or Golden Rule approach? Does the ad pass the "veil of ignorance" test (textbook, p. 117)?

A few thoughts or helps:

The glossary of insults is huge. If there is an opportunity for someone to feel or be offended, they will be. We live in a culture of indignation. We all are on guard; we all are skeptical. "Who would've known that would insult those people?" You will.

Describe >> Interpret >> Evaluate. Consider your intended meanings in comparison to potential interpretations before you sign off on a message. For example, even a smile means different things in different cultures. In Japan, for example, it means, "I don't understand what you are saying." Or it means, "No. I want you to go away."

Ethical decision-making requires a process. Having diverse people in the room does you no good without a process, without systematic dialogue and conversation. But you need to start by accessing diversity. This doesn't mean finding a "token" Muslim; one person cannot speak for a people, a religion, a culture or an ethnicity. It does mean finding a shaman, a source of wisdom.

Warning: Do not adopt a vernacular or attitude, which is similar to putting on a costume. (“What up?” on the GOP.com site?) You are who you are. You can try to disappear into their world, however.

Why don’t Rastafarians use the word ‘me’? What is object-subject? What happens to subjects? Bob Marley said, “Shit don’t happen to me. I am an agent of change.” Here is one of Marley’s lyrics:

*Old pirates, yes, they rob i;
Sold i to the merchant ships,
Minutes after they took i
From the bottomless pit ...*

At the end, ask yourself: Does my ad have voice, context and complexity?

- If you have voice, you won’t patronize me. I am present in the story.
- If there is context, there are facts, background, understanding.
- If there is complexity, you can avoid stereotype. You provide this through research, good sourcing, deep learning. This forces you to see the grays, the nuance.

How can you accomplish all of this using only the Web? Google? How could you learn about a people group using only the Hubble telescope? You have to go into the inner sanctum, you have to care, you have to be curious, compassionate, vital, alive, and you have to listen. You will never regret it!



Ikea designed this hijab for its female Muslim employees, who are prohibited by their religion from being in public with an uncovered head.