

Worksheet for “Modernism”

Malcolm Barnard, *Graphic Design as Communication*, Routledge.

A thorough understanding of Barnard’s essay is necessary for engaging in class discussion and for writing your first paper. Completing this worksheet will help you familiarize yourself with that text.

*Read through all these questions before you read the chapter. Answer with thoughtful responses to receive a higher score. Keep each answer under 300 words. Create a separate document named *Worksheet1_mylastname.doc* and upload it to PAWS by **Tuesday, September 16.***

1. Barnard contrasts modernism and modernity. Explain why having a Tivo and air-cushioned athletic shoes are an example of *modernity*, rather than *modernism*.
2. Barnard breaks down modernism into five main themes, which are
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
3. Graphic design was not common under feudalism, but is common today. What conditions does Barnard mention that brought about a new range of experiences?
4. Barnard says most graphic designers have only focused on two aspects of modernism, which are
 - a.
 - b.
5. On p. 115 Barnard says that “few are concerned to explain design work in terms of the disintegration of subjectivity.” Here Barnard is referring to subjectivity as the opposite of objectivity. Barnard means that critics usually only discuss modern design in terms of the designer’s personal, subjective decisions even though the modern world was so fragmented that designers often lacked clear subjectivity. Which of the five themes is related to the disintegration of subjectivity?
6. Soffici’s *BIFSZF* an example of which theme? Why?
7. Ilya Zdanevitch’s *Bearded Heart* an example of which theme? Why?
8. Barnard criticizes the practice of calling design work “universal” or “timeless.” Why does Barnard have a problem with these terms?
9. Barnard states that “there can be no such thing as non-cultural communication?” Does this make a graphic designer’s job harder or easier?
10. Milton Glaser (as cited by Barnard) states that the themes of modernism were used selectively by U. S. corporations. What were the corporations’ goals? Were the corporations effective?
11. List three different thesis statements about designs created in the twentieth century. You will discuss a piece in terms of its relationship to modernism. Each thesis statement could form the basis of a paper.

Example of a thesis statement: *Bruce Rogers’ page from The Centaur shows that book designers continued to use classical forms well into the twentieth century, despite the popularity of modernism in other areas of graphic design.*

 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

PROJECT #1: MODERNISM IN GRAPHIC DESIGN

Read Chapter 6 “Modernism” from *Graphic Design as Communication* by Malcolm Barnard and complete the worksheet and upload as directed. Your paper is due on PAWS by **Thursday 9/25/14**.

Your paper’s title will be “_____ and Modern Design.” Its topic will be ways that a piece of graphic design is, or isn’t, a modernist work. Write about design created between 1900 and 2000 which is NOT discussed by Barnard. It should be an example of graphic design (as opposed to fine art, architecture, etc.). If it is mass produced and communicates with text, it is probably graphic design. Good thesis statements go beyond simple, obvious arguments. Examples of good thesis statements:

- ~ Jan Tschichold’s flyer for *Die Neue Typographie* is an excellent example of modernism, even though it has justified paragraphs and capital letters.
- ~ Bruce Rogers’ page from *The Centaur* shows that some books continued to use classical (rather than modern) forms well into the twentieth century, despite the general popularity of modernism at the time.
- ~ Bradbury Thompson’s *Westvaco Inspirations* used victorian-era engravings, but in a style consistent with modernism.

Imagine that another student asked you whether a design were modern or not, and you had the opportunity to share what you had just learned from Barnard. Write two or more pages describing why your piece is, or isn’t, a modernist work. Your example will probably conform to Barnard’s descriptions in some ways but not all ways – and this will form most of your discussion. Remember that even Barnard does not have a simple, single formula that applies to all modernist work.

You may need to research the designer or the client for your piece, in order to infer the creator’s intent.

You don’t have to defend the piece you write about. Visual description (the lettering is blue, the figure is wearing a brown suit, etc.) is only necessary if it explains how the piece is, or isn’t, a modernist work.

Upload your paper to PAWS by **Thursday 9/25/14**. Late work will receive a lower grade.

GUIDELINES

Review your paper to be sure that all quoted text and all images are attributed. Quotes must be in quotation marks and sources must be cited as footnotes or endnotes. If not, you may be committing plagiarism, a serious offense. Plagiarism will be reported to the university and can result in remarks on your permanent record and expulsion from GSU. Attribute all ideas and information not your own, including information from the internet. Provide full information about where the image came from.

FORMAT

Turn in a color reproduction of the piece you write about and cite the image’s source. Papers should be typed, double-spaced, with footnotes or endnotes in Microsoft Word or else made into a PDF. Other formats will not be accepted.

GRADING CRITERIA

- ~ Paper follows directions regarding length, format, timeframe, cited sources, etc.
- ~ Thesis is clearly stated and the selected design is appropriate for the paper, allowing you to make observations about when and why it was made and how it communicates.
- ~ Complexity: your ideas are defended in a way that takes into account the complexity of cultural and aesthetic issues. Modernism is not a simple checklist of criteria but has evolved authentically in response to complex forces, and your paper must reflect this to receive a high score.
- ~ Research goes beyond merely stating general knowledge. Research may involve consulting other design critics besides Barnard or reading historical accounts of design.
- ~ Writing craft: Graphic design gives form to the written word, and you will be expected to honor the conventions of writing. Get a trusted friend to proofread your paper before you turn it in. Edit. Run spellcheck. Edit again. This will take time, so plan accordingly.
- ~ Synthesis: well written conclusions remind the reader that you have said something interesting and important. Spend time working out your conclusions and make sure they are clear and well supported.

PROJECT #1: MODERNISM IN GRAPHIC DESIGN
EVALUATION RUBRIC

Criteria	4	3	2	1
Thesis	Thesis is an original and convincing response to assignment.	Thesis is somewhat convincing, or somewhat relevant to assignment.	Thesis not clear, not supported, or relates weakly to assignment.	Thesis contradicted, unreasonable, irrelevant, or not evident.
Complexity	Arguments show nuance and complexity of analysis.	Arguments somewhat simple or lack precision.	Few arguments rise above simple assertions, or claims are not effectively supported.	Arguments and assertions are crude, not related to stated thesis, or implausible.
Research	Writing consistently shows clear cultural awareness and is backed up by research, textual and/or visual; assertions are based on evidence.	Writing shows some cultural awareness and evidence of research; observations occasionally backed up by evidence.	Writing shows little cultural awareness or evidence of research; observations rarely relate to research cited or misinterpret source materials.	Writing shows lack of cultural awareness or disregard for common knowledge; no evidence of relevant research; sources not acknowledged; or assertions contradict research.
Craft	Text is well organized, logical, and succinct; uses vocabulary appropriate to the assignment.	Text could be improved by better organization, succinctness, or observation of writing conventions. Occasional use of appropriate vocabulary.	Lack of organization, inappropriate or irrelevant discussions detract from thesis. Vocabulary not appropriate for the assignment.	Text is hard to understand or uses inappropriate style. Lack of attention to craft, or misuse of language, undermine thesis and general credibility of author.
Synthesis	Conclusions synthesize claims.	Partial synthesis of claims.	Claims not fully reconciled; stated conclusion only weakly related to thesis	Claims contradict each other.

Worksheet

Seval Dülgeroglu Yavuz's "Mediating Messages" from *Design Studies*

Answer the following questions. Your score will be based on your giving thoughtful responses. Keep each answer under 300 words.

Upload your answers as mylastname_wksht2.doc or mylastname_wksht2.pdf to PAWS by **Thursday October 23**.

1. In the first paragraph, Yavuz says that advertisers face a twofold challenge in order to be effective. Name that twofold challenge.

2. Yavuz mentions that the public sees advertising as one of the least ethical occupations. How is this relevant to her discussion of stereotypes? Does Yavuz persuade the reader that advertising is, or isn't ethical?

3. Yavuz argues that advertisements contribute to the reproduction of cultural reality and society at large. Some of the stereotypes in her examples include: *Fathers don't worry much about their children.* *People who ride motorcycles are intimidating.* Name a **less-than-obvious** stereotype used in an advertisement in the article (not an obvious stereotype, such as that women cook).

4. On p. 287 Yavuz says that advertising plays on existing stereotypes but also helps adapt these ideas to present conditions. Her example of the GE advertisement plays on old ideas about technology being more masculine than feminine, yet the ad seems up to date in terms of the style of the kitchen and the models in the ad. How does this ad retard changing social attitudes about men and women, while appearing modernistic? Do not merely describe the ad.

5. State Yavuz's main argument in one sentence.

6. Write three possible thesis statements that illustrate Yavuz's idea that advertisements contribute to the reproduction of cultural reality and society at large. Later, you will locate ads to see if they illustrate your thesis. Example: *People in ads only wear glasses when they are intended to appear studious, intelligent, or unattractive.*

- a.
- b.
- c.

Upload your worksheet by **Thursday, October 23**.

Argue that some aspect of cultural reality is reproduced by advertisements, and provide visual evidence in the form of a slideshow. Upload your completed slideshow and short paper by end of day **Tuesday, Nov 11**.

REPRODUCING CULTURAL REALITY

Yavuz, in "Mediating Messages," explains how advertisements contribute to the reproduction of cultural reality and society at large. Choose one particular aspect of cultural reality that you notice is reproduced by advertisements, and find three to five advertisements that serve as evidence for your observations. Create a slide show of your evidence, including captions, detail shots, or whatever is needed to convince your audience of the ads' effects. You may be asked to present your show to your classmates.

Some aspects suggested by Yavuz:

- ~ People who ride motorcycles are intimidating.
- ~ Buying products helps people know who they are.

Think of your own, original, themes. Look for advertising messages that are not always true but that perpetuate stereotypes. Obvious stereotypes such as "ads for cleaning products usually show women" will not be acceptable.

Collect three to five example of ads that present your theme in subtly different ways. Ads may be from the same campaign or they may be from different times and places, but they must depend on the same cultural stereotypes. You must make sense of the complex dynamics between the visual and verbal elements of the ads and the societies in which the ads appeared. Showing ads that are merely offensive or outrageous does not fulfill this assignment.

Pay close attention to styles and symbols and how they affect the message. Typefaces, colors, body copy and headline copy should all be considered, as well as elements in both the foreground and background of each ad. Make sure each image helps viewers understand your theme.

The written component **MUST** explain where and when the images originally appeared. Many ads on the web are not suitable for this project because they lack context, which is very important for making your case about cultural reproduction. Some of the most exciting ads on the web are entirely fake and should not be used.

CREATE YOUR SHOW

Begin by searching magazines and thinking about stereotypes in popular culture.

Grd3910.blogspot.com has links to several online collections of advertisements.

Scan advertisements or get someone to help you. Images should be no bigger than 1200 pixels in any direction. Don't use badly cropped, low-resolution images. Combine images into a single PDF using Acrobat Professional or Adobe Illustrator. Take full notes about where your images came from. "Google" is not a location!

Images from motion media (TV commercials, etc.) present considerable technical challenges and may not be appropriate for this project.

Upload your slideshow to PAWS named *mylastname_show.pdf*

Files named differently will receive a lower grade

WRITTEN CONCLUSIONS

Your written conclusion and presentation should explain how your images perpetuate a stereotype. Explain the subtle ways the ads contribute to the reproduction of cultural reality.

Your written component should not only recapitulate, but formalize the content of the visual presentation. Write **two or more pages** that clearly put forth a thesis and a defense of the thesis. The paper must provide an historical, conceptual, or theoretical context for your argument. A bibliography or proper record of both information and image sources must be added after the text. This paper must be cogent and must be written clearly and competently. The attributes of good writing in the field are exemplified by Barnard and Yavuz, and will be discussed in class.

Quotes must be in quotation marks and sources must be cited, or you may be committing plagiarism, a serious offense. Plagiarism will be reported to the university and can result in remarks on your permanent record and expulsion from GSU.

You will have an opportunity to revise your project for a better grade. Do not turn in flash drives or email this project to me. Late work will receive a significantly lower grade.

**PROJECT #2: MEDIATED MESSAGES
 EVALUATION RUBRIC**

Criteria	4	3	2	1
Thesis	Thesis is an original and convincing response to assignment.	Thesis is somewhat convincing, or somewhat relevant to assignment.	Thesis not clear, not supported, or relates weakly to assignment.	Thesis contradicted, unreasonable, irrelevant, or not evident.
Complexity	Arguments show nuance and complexity of analysis.	Arguments somewhat simple or lack precision.	Few arguments rise above simple assertions, or claims are not effectively supported.	Arguments and assertions are crude, not related to stated thesis, or implausible.
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Synthesis	Conclusions synthesize claims.	Some synthesis of claims.	Claims not fully reconciled; stated conclusion only weakly relates to thesis	Claims contradict each other.