Advertising in the UK
COM CM 334 (Elective A)
[Semester Year]

Instructor Information
A. Name Robin B Evans  MA MPhil
B. Day and Time [meeting day and class time]
C. BU Telephone 020 7244 6255
D. Email rgbe@bu.edu
E. Office Hours By appointment

Course Description
COM CM 334 focuses on London’s stellar reputation for creative and production excellence; examines how the advertising is shaped by a consumer culture that is anti-being-sold-to, irreverent and irony-modulated, and emphasizes the way defying research risks diluting creative.

Overview
Why study UK advertising?
London is home to the largest marcoms holding company WPP: parent of global ad agencies Ogilvy, Grey, JWT and Young & Rubicam and international media behemoths MediaCom, Mindshare and MEC.

It is ‘pound for pound the most creative market in the world’ – David Droga on why his New York agency’s foothold in Europe had to be London. Miami-based The Community opens in London ‘as we thought how we wanted to expand internationally, London was always in our plans’

From BBH to adam&eveDDB to Mother, London agencies have consistently won shelf loads of precious metal at Cannes and other international awards festivals.

A London agency BMP DDB pioneered the account planning function.

The biggest brand name in the firmament of adland is Saatchi. From a boutique start-up to, twenty-three years on, the biggest agency in the world.

British directors have operated in a culture viewing a commercial as a micro-movie rather than a selling vehicle long before the currency of branded video content [indeed when Chiat Day were looking for a director for Apple’s ‘1984’ the agency’s view was only a Brit could bring the necessary filmic quality to the anthem – that director was (Sir) Ridley Scott]

The UK lays claim to be one of the most advanced digital markets with on-line share of advertising now over half of all adspend.

CM 334 will provide a set of wider horizons to the practice, delivery and consumption of advertising, benefiting – by complementation and perspective enlargement -advertising, marketing and commercial communications courses.
However, ‘Advertising in the UK’ is, too, a stand-alone course: it should prove [as indeed it historically has] at worst reasonably, at best profitably manageable and instructive by those coming on-board from other disciplines.

**Course Objectives**

The rationale for incorporating the Aesthetic and Philosophy Hub Areas into COM CM 334 is logically respectable but, possibly, surprising. Which is to be expected; if philosophical inquiry and creative discourse can’t surprise then their credentials are surely wanting.

**Hub Learning Outcomes**

1] **Aesthetic Exploration**

*Outcome 1:* Students will demonstrate knowledge of notable works in literature and/or the arts, including the cultural contexts in which those works were created, and be able to identify their ongoing significance and relevance.

To provide accelerated familiarisation with British advertising and consumer culture and within this context to deliver an appreciation of the strategy and execution of campaigns awarded for their outstanding – and often high risk -creative.

*Outcome 2:* Students will demonstrate the reasoning skills and vocabulary necessary to interpret a work of art [literature, music, visual arts, etc.,]

(1) To appreciate - by exploration and assessment - the relationship between ad-creative & art-creative; then to understand how an ad can fall under various cultural concepts – saliently of an art entity kind - and how an art work can be interpreted as advertising. (2) To appreciate that while common to both is engaging an audience to pay attention to an idea not all advertising is art.

*Outcome 3:* Students will produce evaluative, analytical, or creative works that demonstrate an understanding of the characteristics – such as genres, modes, styles and cultural history – of at least one literary or artistic medium.

To be able to distinguish and compare the factors – the briefs, the codes & regulations, the research and, tellingly, the consumer’s antipathy to radical change - informing the creative.

2] **Philosophical Interpretations and Life’s Meanings**

*Outcome 1:* Students will demonstrate knowledge of notable works in philosophical thought, make meaningful connections among them, and be able to relate those works to their own lives and those of others.

To provide fast-track familiarity with the problem of inductive reasoning and how it affects research in general, in particular testing advertising proposals.

*Outcome 2:* Students will demonstrate the reasoning skills and possess the vocabulary to reflect upon significant philosophical questions such as what constitutes a good life, right action, meaningful activity, knowledge, truth, or a just society.

To inculcate philosophical acumen vis-à-vis the perception of events such as: a campaign or single ad takes off, goes viral against all expectations; another, researched every which way, tanks.
Additional Course Objectives

1. To provide conversancy with leading British agencies: full-service, boutique/a la carte, content production, digital, media buying & planning, implementation; to enable students to get the most, in advance, of their work placements in London.

2. To enable students to identify the differences and similarities between UK and US consumer culture.

3. To produce a critical understanding of the grammar of media planning and the message/creative characteristics of UK specific above- and through-the-line media, from broadcast TV to Digital Out-of-Home to On-Line/Programmatic

Methodology

Though the core teaching medium for many of the sessions will be lecture based the delivery of the material will be designed to optimize inter-activity.

The scheme of work should be regarded as a broad road map with the route being allowed to evolve organically depending on the dominant interest of the class, the speed of grasping concepts and other response factors.

Class participation, discussion and feedback will be a major, grade-carrying component in each session. So: (a) at the start of each class designated students will share a newsworthy content or campaign story; (b) Class #3 is platformed on discussion topics; (c) each student will run a critical appraisal of an ad, the de-construct assessing the status of the creative [qv., Aesthetic Exploration Outcomes], and (d) a group of students will present a case study of a leading UK agency [qv., Grading Criteria/Scheme of Work]

Attendance

Classes

All Boston University London Programme students are expected to attend each and every class session, seminar, and field trip in order to fulfil the required course contact hours and receive course credit. Any student that has been absent from two class sessions (whether authorised or unauthorised) will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their continued participation on the programme. This may result in the student having to take a medical leave of absence from the programme or withdraw from the programme.

Authorised Absence

Students who expect to be absent from any class should notify a member of Academic Affairs and complete an Authorised Absence Approval Form 10 working days in advance of the class date (except in the case of absence due to illness for more than one day. In this situation students should submit the Authorised Absence Approval Form with the required doctor’s note as soon as possible).

Please note: Submitting an Authorised Absence Approval Form does not guarantee an authorised absence.

Students may apply for an authorised absence only under the following circumstances:

- **Illness (first day of sickness):** If a student is too ill to attend class, the student must phone the BU London Student Affairs Office (who will in turn contact the student’s lecturer).
- **Illness (multiple days):** If a student is missing more than one class day due to illness, the student must call into the BU London Student Affairs Office each day the student is ill. Students must also provide the Student Affairs office with a completed Authorised Absence Approval Form and sick note from a local doctor excusing their absence from class.
- **Important placement event that clashes with a class (verified by internship supervisor)**
• Special circumstances which have been approved by the Directors (see note below).

The Directors will only in the most extreme cases allow students to leave the programme early or for a significant break.

Unauthorised Absence
Any student to miss a class due to an unauthorised absence will receive a 4% grade penalty to their final grade for the course whose class was missed. This grade penalty will be applied by the Academic Affairs office to the final grade at the end of the course. As stated above, any student that has missed two classes will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their participation on the programme as excessive absences may result in a ‘Fail’ in the class and therefore expulsion from the programme.

Lateness
Students arriving more than 15 minutes after the posted class start time will be marked as late. Any student with irregular class attendance (more than two late arrivals to class) will be required to meet with the Assistant Director of Academic Affairs and if the lateness continues, may have his/her final grade penalised.

Units of Coursework & Grading Criteria

1. Class participation/contribution: 15%
2. Final examination. Two hours. 12 questions. Answer any four. 20%
3. Solus presentation. Ad de-construct. 20% [qv. Scheme of Work Class #8]
4. Group presentation. Case study of a leading UK ad agency. 25% [qv. Scheme of Work Class #5]
5. Two Assignment papers of four double-spaced pages (1000 words) each. 10% each.

Grading

The following Boston University table explains the grading system that is used by most faculty members on Boston University’s Study Abroad London Programmes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Honour Points</th>
<th>Usual %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>93-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>89-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>85-88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>81-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>77-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>69-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>65-68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>60-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>Unmarked</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading Criteria
‘Incomplete’ or I grades are not permitted because of the obvious difficulty in making up missed work once the student has left the country. All work must be completed on time. We also do not allow ‘Audits’ (AU), ‘Withdrawals’ (W), or ‘Pass/Fail’ (P) grades.

The grades reflect the quality of the work. Lecturers and students should use the following criteria for an understanding of what each grade means.
A This exceptional grade is assigned only to work that has persistently outstanding quality in both substance and presentation. The student must demonstrate a sustained capacity for independent thought and extensive study, producing rigorous and convincing analyses in well-ordered prose.

A- Awarded to work that is clearly focused and analytical, and based on wide reading. The student must cover all the principal points of a question and systematically develop a persuasive overall thesis, allowing for one or two venial omissions or inapt expressions.

B+, B, B- This range of grades indicates that the student has shown some evidence of original thought and intellectual initiative. The student has cited sources beyond the class materials, and shown a degree of originality in perception and/or approach to the subject. The work will show thoughtful management of material, and a good grasp of the issues. The differences between a B+, a straight B and a B- may reflect poor presentation of the material, or mistakes in punctuation, spelling and grammar.

C+, C, C- Work in this grade range is satisfactory, but uninspiring. If the work is simply a recitation of the class materials or discussions, and shows no sign of genuine intellectual engagement with the issues, it cannot deserve a higher grade. Should an essay fail to provide a clear answer to the question as set, or argue a position coherently, the grade will fall within this range.

Quality of presentation can lift such work into the upper levels of this grade range. Work of this quality which is poorly presented, and riddled with errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation, will fall into the lower end of the range. To earn a C grade, the work must demonstrate that the student is familiar with the primary course material, be written well enough to be readily understood, be relevant to the assignment, and, of course, be the student’s own work except where properly cited.

D A marginal pass can be given where some but not all the elements of the course have been completed satisfactorily.

F The failing grade indicates the work is seriously flawed in one or more ways:
• Obvious lack of familiarity with the material
• So poorly written as to defy understanding
• So brief and insubstantial that it fails to properly address the subject
• Material presented is not relevant to the assignment
• Demonstrates evidence of plagiarism (see following section in Academic Conduct Code)

Please refer to the Academic Handbook for detailed grading criteria and policies on plagiarism: http://www.bu.edu/london/current-semester

* Final Grades are subject to deductions by the Academic Affairs Office due to unauthorised absences.

Schedule
Ten class meetings. These run on [class day at class time]

Contingency Class Date: [date]


However, if you are on the core Advertising and Marketing track you may be going to this museum during your course.
Scheme of Work

Reading through the slide chapters and handout material in advance of each class is mandatory.

Class # 1
. UK adscape: high profile events/stories – M&A’s, account wins/losses, start-ups, creative awards.
. Review of legendary UK ad titans and their legacies: from David Ogilvy to the Saatchi brothers to Sir Martin Sorrell
. British anti-sell culture: how it informs low product focus strategies – elliptical and allegorical approaches designed to ‘go in under the radar’ of consumer negative & cynical attitudes.
. ‘Big Picture’ review of application of Aesthetic Exploration + Philosophical Interpretations Outcomes to the course.
. Quiz-style paper distributed.

Class # 2
. Review of quiz responses
. Anatomizing ad-creative & art-creative; breaking rules + communicating ideas
. Concept of the commercial as a micro-move cf. a selling vehicle. Top UK ads by genre-busting strategy, production innovation & on-line salience. BMW’s media and creative paradigm-shifting album The Hire. UK’s Superbowl ‘moment’: retail pre-xmas spectaculars epitomized by the John Lewis adsfilms
. Exploring the evolution of filmic ad into branded video content
. Discussion: Does research stifle creative?

Class # 3
. Explicating the hazards of inductive inference in focus group testing and cognate research.
. Discussion topics: (a) Is the 30-second TV spot destined to be killed off by on-line content? (b) Is celebrity advertising set to be vanquished by social media influencers? (c) Views on parody and spoof advertising.

Class # 4
Agency positioning: cross-overs and re-badging; rise of Agency-Client Matchmakers.
The future of the ad agency.

Class # 5
. Group presentations. Each group will run an appraisal of a UK agency. The treatment should cover how, why and by whom founded; USP philosophy & culture; incumbent and major historic clients; billings and league table rankings; indie or holding company subsidiary.

Testing: fallibilities and fragilities. The presentation will focus on a particular ad/campaign which either [a] notwithstanding reluctance of the client to sign-off, because of unfavourable research, went on to become an iconic success, or [b] even though the proposals were overwhelmingly confirmed by research the campaign performed poorly.

Class # 6
. Field trip to a London agency

Class # 7
. Hard sell provocative PSA, charity, issue and cause campaigns. Issue: are (many) UK ads in this sector so shocking as to be ineffective? Is being offensive cheap surprise? Is high-bar shock cheap creative? Or is it morally justified? Critical review of child and animal cruelty, alcohol and drug abuse, road safety and domestic violence campaigns.
. First assignment paper to be filed.

Class # 8
. Part (a) Individual student critical appraisal of two ads/contents – the material can be drawn from any medium. Each de-construct should include the communication objective/s, the target group profile, the proposition: the benefit/experience delivered, the tone or ‘voice’ plus assessment of the creative: the art direction and, if applicable, the copy, casting, sound design, music along with the creative use of the medium/media. Part (b) Each student will single out two artworks [painting, installation, sculpture, say] and examine how they can/might be concepted as advertising. The presentation will conclude with an exploration and assessment of the thesis that All Art is Advertising but not all Advertising is Art.


Class # 9
Digital metrics - especially the over-valuation of top-of-the-funnel ‘share’ and ‘likes’ and the inflation of ‘views’ by bot traffic.
Understanding **programmatic**. And why some media agencies and marketing managements have become increasingly-less than enthusiastic about it.
. Guest Speaker
. Second assignment paper to be filed

Class # 10
. Financing TV in the UK. Statutory caps on amount & distribution of air time. Regulation of TV programme sponsorship arrangements. Explicating the advantages of brand budgets being diverted out of spots in commercial breaks and into sponsorship credits.
Non-commercial financing: the BBC funded by licence payments from each household.
c. one-third of all TV viewers not available to advertisers or sponsors. Result: UK TV advertising is the second most expensive in the world. Should it become a commercial player? Attractions and drawbacks for advertisers, agencies and viewers.
. Revision & pick-ups

Class # 11
. Final Examination

**Reading**

CM 334 does not slavishly track a single ‘biblical’ text, as there is no one work that encapsulates the poly-focused material in the syllabus. Moreover a lot goes out of date pretty quickly - especially in the world of digital TV, media tariffs, account moves et al. All classes will be supported by hard
copies of the pptx slide chapters plus article and blog handouts. This material will be distributed the week before the class scheduled to draw on it.

The slide chapters and additional reading may be found on Blackboard: http://learn.bu.edu

Required reading Hub Learning Outcomes

Explores how the value of art is related to the branding of the artist; in particular how with Damien Hirst and Jeff Koons the brand equity to monetary value ratio exceeds – vertiginously – anything in the realm of conventional product branding.

Philosophical Interpretation:  [www.the-rathouse.com/CRContents.html](http://www.the-rathouse.com/CRContents.html)  
Summary and commentary on the chapters in Karl Popper’s *Conjectures & Refutations*  

It is strongly recommended that you sight current and recent copies of trade publications:  
*Campaign*  *Creative Review*  *Broadcast*  *AdMap*

[www.moreaboutadvertising.com](http://www.moreaboutadvertising.com): highlights major ad industry stories; free and updated daily  
[www.asa.org.uk](http://www.asa.org.uk): explains how the Advertising Standards Authority regulates via a voluntary code all non-broadcast advertising and final adjudication role on broadcast commercials on UK franchised channels.  
[www.clearcast.co.uk](http://www.clearcast.co.uk): a ngo certifying UK TV ads for code compliance prior to transmission  
[www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk): regulator and competition authority for UK communications industries with responsibility TV and radio

Some other rewarding websites:  
Adbrands.net: profiles four favourite ‘Ads of the Week’ plus updates on account moves  
[www.visit4ads](http://www.visit4ads): View and download ads including reviews of all the latest spots featured in *Campaign*.  
[www.adturds.co.uk](http://www.adturds.co.uk): A mischievous blog trashing tv ads that are sh*t  
Adweek. ‘Best Spots’ [http://www.adweek.com](http://www.adweek.com)  
Ad gossip. [http://www.adrants.com](http://www.adrants.com)  
[Digital.bulletin@haynet.com](mailto:Digital.bulletin@haynet.com): near-daily round-ups of what’s happening in the digital sphere  
Mothers of invention: Ten years of the ad agency *Mother* that rewrote the rules.  
[http://www.independent.co.uk/news/media](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/media)  
[www.tellyads.com](http://www.tellyads.com): Archive of over 17000 UK ads on tap for free (albeit lo-res) access.

Useful texts include:

Ogilvy D. *Confessions of an Advertising Man*. Southbank.2010  
A distillation of the tactics & techniques + other 'how to' advice from The Pope of Advertising

Ogilvy D. *Ogilvy on Advertising*. Pan Books.2011  
More insights - from 'good ideas come from the unconscious' to imperatives: 'Make the product the hero'

Young M. *Ogilvy on Advertising in the Digital Age.*
A sequel to Ogilvy’s classic advertising handbooks featuring essential strategies in the digital age.

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

Part 'how to' guide from co-founder of BBH producing ground-breaking campaigns for Audi, Levis, Xbox, Lynx (Axe), Johnny Walker, Barnardos, BA et al., and part appraisal of why so many great campaigns are based on storytelling - the most powerful form of communication.


'British advertising was revolutionised by CDP. The ad agency....was responsible for the most innovative, creative, thought-provoking and downright funny advertising to hit the British public..... CDP set the standard for years to come.'

Parker G and Lippert B. *Confessions of a Mad Man*.

Legendary wild British ad guru in New York. George Parker's tales from Madison Avenue make 'Mad Men' pale in comparison.

Essex A. *The End of Advertising. Why It Had to Die, and the Creative Resurrection to Come* Spiegel & Grau. 2017
