



Visual Rhetoric EXAM II

Developing a print ad for Ikea

“Appreciate my uniqueness, but treat me the same.”

--Keith Woods, Poynter Institute

Your mission: Design a print magazine ad for Ikea that seeks to engage U.S. Muslims, but one that doesn't exclude or alienate anyone else.

You choose the product or item to advertise: <http://www.ikea.com/us/en/>. In fact, you get to 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 print ad** will (hypothetically) appear in airline in-flight magazines, such as Delta's Sky (<http://deltaskymag.delta.com/>) or United's Hemisphere (<http://www.hemispheremagazine.com/>). The ad can be either vertical or horizontal/landscape. The audience for these ads is largely U.S., but by virtue of the nature of air travel should include other nationalities, as well. The ad should be in English.

You can work alone or in groups, but know that something like this would not be a solo event in the 'real world.' Each ad will earn or receive one grade, so a group shares the one grade.

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

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, so underestimate my ability to decipher your meaning rather than over-estimating).
- a narrative rationale of the ad in complete, error-free sentences, a rationale that explains why you did what you did.

Type up and print out all written work.

Due date: coincident with group presentations Friday, Aug. 4

Perspectives to help you (and to help you write your narrative):

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: Do you consider or take into account contemporary events and sensitivities, like 9/11, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan? The ways in which Muslims have been stereotyped and scapegoated in American society? 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? Demonstrate some nuance in understanding that there are many Muslim cultures, many Muslim communities and sub-communities.

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? This and the cultural perspective are the heart and soul of the course, so spend some time demonstrating with the power tools how your ad works (Peirce, Berger, Barthes). What is the mythic truth of the ad? What's its 'big idea' or metaphor? What are its "gutters"?

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? How is the ad composed in terms of the Big Four: Balance, unity, rhythm and contrast? What is its CVI? Does it use or facilitate a Z pattern of readership? What typeface(s) did you choose, and why?

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)? Elaborate/demonstrate this.

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, right?" Well, you will.

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 could mean, "The answer is 'no,' and I want you to go away now."

Warning: Do not adopt a vernacular or attitude, which is similar to putting on a costume. Don't patronize. Avoid stereotype. Do not attempt this project using only Google or the web. How could you learn about a people group using only a telescope? You have to go into the inner sanctum, you have to care, you have to be curious, compassionate, vital, and alive. And you have to listen.



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

To help you:

- >>[Selling to Muslims](#), video from the NYTimes
- >>[Examples](#) of student work on this exam
- >>[Islam for Journalists](#) (brand new .pdf download)
- >>[Hometica.com](#) (for graphics for your projects)
- >>[Islam for Journalists](#) (two free online courses)