

Sequence One Major Paper: A Question of Diversity

engl 131 / sec. A3 / spring quarter 2005-06 / chang



Over the breadth and depth of your first sequence of assignments, we have considered, discussed, read, and written about different kinds of texts, cultural productions, issues, identities, and politics. We have scratched the surface of the world around us uncovering different constructions, categories, stereotypes, and social locations including race, gender, sexuality, class, and language. Lippi-Green's essay "Teaching Children How to Discriminate" and Lowe's essay "Imagining Los Angeles in the Production of Multiculturalism" both address issues of diversity, of difference, and of overlapping identities and ideologies. They both critique US cultural productions

that attempt to be nondiscriminatory, to be inclusive, to be "for everyone" and reveal the possibilities, impossibilities, potentials, and dangers of these productions be they Disney film or multicultural fair. Both writers participate in cultural studies, which "allows the analyst to attend to the many moments within the cycle of production, circulation, and consumption of [an artifact] through which meanings accumulate, slip and shift" (Lister & Wells 459). Both argue that our understandings of self, culture, difference, and power can be excavated through the analysis of the productions we create and consume.

Goal and Outcomes

For this 5- to 7-page formal paper, you will locate and choose one recent and compelling cultural production: **a print advertisement, a movie poster, a commercial, or a website**. Consider well the source of your artifact, its visual and cultural interest, and its overall context. You will provide a clean, high quality copy or link to the artifact.

Drawing smartly and confidently upon both Lippi-Green and Lowe, you will **close-read and analyze** your chosen artifact to **identify and critique a stereotype, a key assumption, a point of intervention used by the artifact**. Armed with the theoretical and cultural studies concepts from the readings and previous assignments and class discussions **generate your own original claim, your own argument** about your artifact. Think about the following questions when you sit down to make your claim (though this is not to be a laundry list for you to simply run down the answers):

- What stereotype or cultural assumption (about race, gender, sexuality, class, or nation) does your artifact make? How is this stereotype or assumption construction and deployed?
- How does your artifact fit (or doesn't fit) into our class's critique of diversity and multiculturalism?
- What meanings does your artifact convey? Does it comment on identity, culture, or power? Are these comments overt or covert?
- What is the importance of your artifact? What does it tell its audience? Who is its intended audience?
- How is its production, circulation, and consumption important to its meaning or meanings?
- How will you apply Lippi-Green's critique of language in Disney films or Lowe's critique of multiculturalism to your artifact?
- What are you trying to prove to your readers about the artifact? Why is your claim important?
- What is **at stake** in your analysis and reading of the text and your artifact?

Your paper by necessity will include a brief explication of the artifact and will **demonstrate your ability to close read** both image and text. Your argument should be supported with valid evidence from the readings, **directly quoting and citing** the texts when necessary. You are required to include **outside sources** (at least two, not to exceed five) including other texts read for this sequence, scholarly journals, and credible newspapers and magazines.

Remember that this paper is **not** about Lippi-Green or Lowe directly, but about **your claim, your analysis, your ideas** about what your artifact is arguing, doing, critiquing, saying, or showing. Also remember that you are not just describing the artifact and how it is a nebulous part of culture, capitalism, advertising, or stereotyping. You will be expected to **critically analyze** your artifact and **persuasively articulate** how it reveals something significant about production, consumption, identity, race, gender, power, reality, or otherness. Keep in mind the **course outcomes** as you work and write.

To summarize, you should be prepared to make a solid and relevant claim using a well-developed and clearly organized analysis of your artifact by situating it within a particular and meaningful context, with clear evidence to support your argument.

Guidelines and Due Dates

Audience: At base, you are writing for an audience that includes a general academic community, which includes your instructor, your classmates, and the authors of the essays we have read. You should imagine a larger, more inclusive audience. Keep in mind that your audience is varied in many ways, including academic experience and familiarity with the texts, so you'll need to consider of what information each type of reader will need to make sense of your essay. Another good way to think about your audience is to imagine the publication in which your essay could appear such as the *Reading Contexts* anthology or e.g. website or a scholarly journal.

Format: This assignment is a formal, academic paper and should follow the manuscript guidelines outlined in the course policies:

- formal title page, appropriate title for your paper
- 5-7 pages, typed, double-spaced, with MLA citations, stapled
- 1 paragraph more specifically describing your audience
- bibliography, correct MLA format
- copy of or link to artifact

Targeted outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4

Paper Proposal/Conference Memo: Bring to your conference on _____ your Conference Memo (Short Paper 1.5 to be assigned), which identifies key concepts, your overall claim, chosen artifact, and a rough outline of your main ideas.

First Draft: Please bring an e-copy of your paper for peer workshopping to class on TUESDAY, APRIL 25

Final Draft: Make revisions based on comments and responses from me and your peers and hand in the revised final draft at the start of class on TUESDAY, MAY 2