

MIT 3207G (001)
Children, Advertising & Consumer Culture
Winter 2019

Time and Place: Tuesdays 2:30 – 5:30pm FNB 1220

Professor: Dr. Selma A. Purac (spurac2@uwo.ca)
Office Hours: Thursdays 1:30pm – 3:30pm FNB 4120
Or by appointment

Course Description:

This course provides a critical survey of issues related to children's advertising, marketing, and consumer culture. The historic rise of children's marketing, the value advertisers place on children, and contemporary controversial debates will be investigated and located within broad theoretical, cultural, social, and institutional contexts.

This course will:

- Survey the theoretical, historical, social, and cultural contexts of children's marketing
- Examine the processes and institutions involved in the creation and dissemination of children's advertising
- Analyze and evaluate children's advertisements and marketing campaigns from a critical perspective
- Analyze the role that children's marketing plays in relation to ideology and identity formation
- Encourage students to assess and analyze the way in which the marketplace has infiltrated their own childhoods and continues to inflect the next generation of consumers

Required Texts:

Linn, Susan. *Consuming Kids: Protecting Our Children from the Onslaught of Marketing and Advertising*. NY: Anchor, 2005.

Additional readings will be posted on OWL

Evaluation:

Essay #1 (Jan 29)	20%
Exam (Mar 12)	25%
Essay #2 (Apr 9)	35%
Presentation	20%

Attendance Policy:

Attendance in class is mandatory, and a record of attendance will be kept by the instructor. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that he or she signs the attendance sheet each class. A student who misses a substantial portion of classes may be banned from submitting the final essay; however, marks will not be awarded for attendance.

Email Policy:

I do not accept assignments via email. If you email me an assignment, I will delete the file without opening it, and your assignment will not count as being submitted.

I will respond to emails sent to my UWO account within two working days. I do not respond to emails over the weekend. Please note that UWO instructors can respond only to UWO email addresses, and that grades cannot be communicated via email.

Email communication should be restricted to questions or concerns that can be quickly and easily addressed via email. While I am happy to discuss your work in person, I will not provide such feedback via email. Thus, do not email me drafts of your assignments; please see me during my office hours or schedule an alternative appointment with me. Consequently, such inquiries need to be made in a timely manner.

WebCT OWL:

Class announcements and assignments will be posted on our OWL site; thus, students are expected to check the site regularly for updates.

Late Assignment Policy:

Please note that assignments are due in class, but they must also be uploaded to our OWL site prior to the posted deadline. I do not email submissions. If you email me an assignment, I will delete the file without opening it, and you will continue to accrue late deductions.

Late assignments will lose 5% per day, unless the student has a documented medical or family emergency. At the discretion of the instructor, a request for an extension may be granted for a legitimate reason; such requests must be made at least ONE WEEK before the due-date of the paper to be considered.

FIMS Grading Policy:

Students will receive graded work worth no less than 15% at least 3 days prior to the deadline for withdrawal without academic penalty. This year, the date by which students are to have received at least 15% of their grade in a Winter semester course is March 4, 2019. Students can find details about this academic policy here: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/evaluation_undergrad.pdf.

Please note, students are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of the grades they have received in their courses. Students who receive academic accommodation for the assignments on which these grades are based may not receive feedback in time to meet this deadline.

The MIT program now has the following class average policy:

- All 1000-level MIT required courses (i.e., 1020E, 1025F/G, 1050A/B) will have a class average of between 67 and 72%.
- All 2000-level MIT required courses (i.e. 2000, 2100, 2200, 2500) will have a class average of between 70 and 75%.
- All 3000-level MIT required courses (i.e. 3000, 3100) will have a class average of between 72 and 77%.
- Elective courses and 4th year seminar courses have no class average requirement.

Please note that students can access information regarding MIT grade range guidelines and the appeals process via the "Appendix A" document posted on our OWL site.

Prerequisites:

University Senate regulations state: "Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites."

Anti-requisites:

MIT 3402F if taken in 2009-10 or 2010-11, MIT 3404F if taken in Intersession in 2010, or MIT 3402G in 2011-12.

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices:

The use of laptops is permitted in class; however, students must use such technologies in a manner that is respectful to both their fellow students and their instructor. Cell phone use is not permitted in class.

Academic Accommodation:

Medical Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or **assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade** must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation in the form of a Student Medical Certificate. It will be the Dean's Office that will determine if accommodation is warranted.

Individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds, or for other reasons. All documentation must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.

For Western University policy on accommodation for medical illness, see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Compassionate Accommodation

Academic accommodation (extensions, makeup tests and exams, additional assignments etc.) may be given to students on compassionate grounds. The situations for which compassionate accommodation can be given must be serious, including significant events such as death in the immediate family, trauma (fire, robbery, harassment, muggings, car accidents, etc.) or emergency situations. Documentation is required.

If a member of your immediate family is seriously ill, obtain a medical certificate from the family member's physician and submit the documentation to your Academic Counsellor. If you have been involved in a severe accident, fire or some other exceptional crises, obtain a copy of the police report or be prepared to provide the necessary documentation upon request.

Generally, for deaths within a student's immediate family (parents, guardians, caregivers, siblings, spouses), bereavement leave is granted, upon provision of documentation. For deaths within a student's extended family, academic accommodation is given for one to three days, upon provision of documentation.

Students seeking additional bereavement leave for religious or other reasons should contact their Academic Counsellors, and provide valid documentation.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. <http://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>. Additional information is given in the Western Academic Calendar.

Midterm Examination Accommodation

Please note that FIMS will be holding a set of makeup exam dates during the midterm examination period in order to accommodate those students who miss their exam due to an unforeseen medical or compassionate emergency (see the guidelines above). These department-wide makeup sessions are scheduled to take place on the following Fridays from 1 – 4pm: February 15, March 1, March 8, March 15, and March 22. To qualify to write a makeup exam, students must submit the appropriate documentation to their academic counsellor. If approved, the professor will determine on which Friday the student will write the makeup exam. No unapproved makeup exams are possible.

Statement on Academic Offences:

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Thus, all sources must be cited BOTH in the bibliography AND in-text. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and all plagiarised assignments will receive a grade of zero. All student work in this course will be submitted for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>). Turnitin will flag any passages and/or phrasing that is lifted from online sources.

Support Services at Western:

Office of the Registrar: www.registrar.uwo.ca
Student Development Centre: www.sdc.uwo.ca
Psychological Services: www.sdc.uwo.ca/psych
Services for Students with Disabilities: www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd
Accessibility Information: www.accessibility.uwo.ca/
Writing Support Centre: www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing
Learning Skills Services: www.sdc.uwo.ca/learning
Indigenous Services: indigenous.uwo.ca/
International and Exchange Student Centre: www.sdc.uwo.ca/int
Career Centre at Western: www.success.uwo.ca/careers/

MIT3207G: Children, Advertising & Consumer Culture

GROUP PRESENTATION (worth 20%)

In groups of three, you will prepare a 20-25 minute class presentation, which will incorporate an additional 5 minutes of discussion. The presentation dates are listed below. Only two groups can present on each general topic, so slots on the sign-up sheet will be filled on a first-come, first-serve basis. Each week, the presentations will reflect upon the general topic of discussion. Listed below are some suggestions and possible topics; keep in mind, however, that these are simply loose guidelines – you will be expected to present on *specific* campaigns, products, or companies, etc. You CANNOT, however, present on the case studies that are listed in the course schedule, companies or products covered in our readings, or any topic that has already been claimed by another group on the sign-up sheet (throughout the term, an updated version of the sign-up sheet can be found on our OWL site). Also, keep in mind that your essay content cannot overlap with your presentation content. Please note that your topic must be passed by me via email at least one week prior to your presentation date; failure to do so will result in a grade penalization for all members in the group.

Guidelines and a grading rubric for the assignment are posted on OWL.

1. General Topic: Advertising and Infants (Jan 29)
 - possible topics include: “Preparing for Baby” checklists, marketing to new fathers, analysis of Mom & Baby programs in Ontario, “Mom Groups” in Ontario, the market for infant-related technologies
2. General Topic: Marketing Infiltration of the Education System (Feb 5)
 - possible topics include: the gendering of educational toys, analysis of toys designed for future career paths, STEM toys, FatBrain Toys, the marketing of Bill Nye the Science Guy
3. General Topic: The Tween (Feb 12)
 - possible topics include: toy trends such as fidget spinners, analysis of trends at the New York Toy Fair, the marketing of beauty products to tweens, the often neglected male tween market, analysis of marketing guidelines for reaching tweens
4. General Topic: The Independent Child Consumer (Feb 26)
 - possible topics include: creative play in advertising, replicating adult roles in children’s play, Nature Valley’s “Get Outside” campaign, adult brands that sell lines for children, Free-Range Parenting (* please note that Build-a-Bear is off limits as a topic)
5. General Topic: Sex, Children, and Advertising (Mar 5)
 - possible topics include: the role that young males play in a discourse that usually revolves around young females, ads that challenge heteronormative roles, unisex advertising to kids (* please note that Calvin Klein is off limits as a topic)
6. General Topic: Violence and Children’s Advertising (Mar 19)
 - possible topics include: marketing contact sports to children, gender and the marketing of dangerous toys, representations of conflict in advertising past vs present
7. General Topic: Selling Food to Children (Mar 26)
 - possible topics include: snack-food packaging and in-store-placement, cartoon-tie-ins in food advertising campaigns, the evolution of school lunches, marketing after-school snacks
8. General Topic: Selling Food to Children continued (Apr 2): see above for possible topics

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Intro: The Kids are Alright?	Jan 8	Case Study: Goldieblox
Week 2: Buyers and Babies: Psychology and Advertising	Jan 15	Readings: -Walter D. Scott "The Psychology of Advertising" (http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1904/01/the-psychology-of-advertising/303465/) -Derek Thompson "Thinking vs. Feeling: The Psychology of Advertising" (http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2011/10/thinking-vs-feeling-the-psychology-of-advertising/247466/)
Week 3: Cradles and Consumers: Rethinking Childhood	Jan 22	Case Studies: Chevrolet and Froot Loops Readings: -Schor "The Changing World of Children's Consumption" (OWL) -Montgomery "Digital Kids" (OWL)
Week 4: Mini-Me: Branding Our Babies	Jan 29	Case Studies: Baby Einstein and Teletubbies Presentations Readings: -Gregory-Thomas "There's a New Mom in Town" (available online through Google Books) -Gregory-Thomas "It's Like Preschool on TV" (OWL) ESSAY 1 DUE
Week 5: Getting Schooled: Commercializing Education	Feb 5	Case Studies: <i>Sesame Street/Blues Clues</i> and Crayola Presentations Readings: -Gladwell "The Stickiness Factor" (OWL) -Roth "Flesh in Wax" (OWL) -Linn "Students for Sale" (course text)
Week 6: From Elmo to Emo: The Terrible Tweens	Feb 12	Case Studies: G.I.A. and cell phone marketing Presentations Readings: -Quart "From the Mall to the Fall: Teen Consultants" (OWL) -McDonnell "March of the Tweens" (OWL)
Week 7:	Feb 18 - 22	READING WEEK

Week 8: Kidfluence: The Autonomous Child Consumer	Feb 26	Case Studies: Car Advertising and LEGO Presentations Readings: -Schor "Empowered or Seduced" (OWL) -Linn "Notes from the Underground" (course text) -Sutherland & Thompson "Kids Influencing Family Purchases" (OWL)
Week 9: So Sexy So Soon: Selling Sex to Children	Mar 5	Case Studies: Bratz/Barbie and Disney Presentations Reading: -Linn "From Barbie to Ken and Britney, the Bratz and Beyond: Sex as Commodity" (course text)
Week 10:	Mar 12	EXAM
Week 11: Running with Scissors: Marketing Violence to Kids	Mar 19	Case Studies: Toy Guns/NERF and <i>Power Rangers</i> Presentations Reading: -Linn "Peacekeeping Battle Stations and Smackdown!: Selling Kids on Violence" (course text)
Week 12: Childish Appetites: Eating Our Way Towards Adulthood	Mar 26	Case Studies: McDonalds and Coke Presentations Reading: -Linn "Through Thick and Thin: The Weighty Problem of Food Marketing" (course text)
Week 13: Are the Kids Really Alright?	Apr 2	Case Studies: Cream of Wheat and Lunchables Presentations No Readings
Week 14: Conclusion	Apr 9	ESSAY 2 DUE

NOTES FROM THE FIMS DEAN'S OFFICE

Winter 2019

Rights and Responsibilities

The conditions governing a student's ability to pursue their undergraduate education at Western are ratified by Senate and can be found on the Academic Policies section of the University Secretariat:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/rights_responsibilities.html

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software Turnitin under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_disabilities.pdf

Medical Consideration

Students seeking academic consideration on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth **10% or more of their final grade** must apply to the Academic Counselling

office of their home Faculty and provide documentation in the form of a [Student Medical Certificate](#). It will be the Dean's Office that will determine if consideration is warranted.

For work worth **less than 10% of the final grade**, the instructor will consider requests for academic consideration on medical grounds made in a timely manner in writing or by appointment in office hours. Such requests need not be accompanied by documentation. The instructor may decide to require documentation be submitted to the appropriate Academic Counselling office.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on consideration for medical illness, see: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Compassionate Accommodation

Academic accommodation (extensions, makeup tests and exams, additional assignments etc.) may be given to students on compassionate grounds. The situations for which compassionate accommodation can be given must be serious, including significant events such as death in the immediate family, trauma (fire, robbery, harassment, muggings, car accidents, etc.) or emergency situations. Documentation is required.

If a member of your immediate family is seriously ill, obtain a medical certificate from the family member's physician and submit the documentation to your Academic Counsellor. If you have been involved in a severe accident, fire or some other exceptional crisis, obtain a copy of the police report or be prepared to provide the necessary documentation upon request. Generally, for deaths within a student's immediate family (parents, guardians, caregivers, siblings, spouses), bereavement leave is granted, upon provision of documentation. For deaths within a student's extended family, academic accommodation is given for one to three days, upon provision of documentation. Students seeking additional bereavement leave should contact their Academic Counsellors with valid documentation.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Academic Calendar](#).

FIMS Undergraduate Grading Policy

The MIT, MPI and MTP programs now have the following class average policy:

- Normally, first year courses required for entry into an MIT or MPI module (MIT 1020E and MIT 1025F/G) are expected to have a course average between 68-72%.
- Normally, second year required courses (MIT 2000, 2100, 2200, 2500) are expected to have a course average between 70 and 75%.
- Normally, third year required courses (MIT 3000, 3100) are expected to have a course average between 72 and 77%.

Elective courses and 4th year seminars have no recommended course averages.

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/>

SUPPORT SERVICES – LINKS

Office of the Registrar:

www.registrar.uwo.ca

Student Development Centre:

www.sdc.uwo.ca

Psychological Services:

www.sdc.uwo.ca/psych

Services for Students with Disabilities:

www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd

Accessibility Information:

www.accessibility.uwo.ca/

Writing Support Centre:

www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing

Learning Skills Services:

www.sdc.uwo.ca/learning

Indigenous Services:

<http://indigenous.uwo.ca/>

International and Exchange Student

Centre: www.sdc.uwo.ca/int

Career Centre at Western:

www.success.uwo.ca/careers/

Appendix A: Suggested Grade Ranges in MIT, MPI and MTP

Guidelines to the MIT Grade Range

These guidelines are benchmarks, and are not to be followed as rigid regulations. They will be adjusted as appropriate to take into account the level of the course and any specific instructions given by a professor. As well, competency in English language usage (including spelling and grammar) may be taken into account in the assignment of grades by individual instructors. Note that the 70-79 grade range is broken into two divisions, as this is the grade range into which a large number of students fall.

90-100 (Outstanding, A+)

The report shows sparkling originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic. Sophisticated synthesis and analysis of the theoretical and conceptual dimensions of the topic are demonstrated. Mastery of complex material and ideas is immediately evident. The topic is treated with sensitivity and subtlety of thought. The quality of the writing and background research is exemplary.

80-89 (Excellent, A)

The report shows originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic; it gets to the heart of the matter with comments and/or questions. It is clearly focused and logically organized. The quality of writing makes the report immediately understandable. Mastery of complex material and ideas is demonstrated. The report is of appropriate length, while preserving the priorities and emphasis of the material, so that the result is meaningful, not simplistic.

75-79 (Very Good, B+)

The report shows above average analysis, critical thinking and independent thought. Claims are supported by ample evidence and the components of the topic are well-researched and presented. The topic is addressed in reasonable depth and/or breadth and covers material appropriate to the course. The analysis is organized around focal points and the argument is easily followed. The report demonstrates an above average ability to write in an intelligible style and to condense material meaningfully and with a concern for priorities of that material.

70-74 (Good, B)

The report shows an attempt at analysis and critical thinking. Claims are supported by reasonable evidence. The topic is addressed in some depth and/or breadth, with references to the appropriate literature and course material. The analysis is organized around focal points. The report is generally well written and well argued.

60-69 (Competent, C)

The report demonstrates adequate comprehension of the topic. The report is on topic and is a reasonable summary of material covered in the course, but goes no further. Facts are stated accurately; the quality of writing is sufficiently intelligible with enough elaboration and enough connections made between ideas to permit a reader to understand the point of the report.

50-59 (Marginal, D)

The report shows less than adequate comprehension of the topic and of the material covered by the course. The report is a less than adequate summary of sources and/or is considerably off-topic. Facts are stated inaccurately or ambiguously; the writing style is difficult to follow; there is insufficient elaboration to permit reader's comprehension of relations among ideas; little judgment is shown in selecting detail for inclusion in the report.

Below 50 (Unacceptable, F)

The report demonstrates a failure to comprehend the topic. The material is disorganized and unintelligible. The report clearly does not meet the minimal requirements of the assignment.

Appendix B: Guidelines of Academic Appeals for FIMS Students

Grounds for Appeal:

The Faculty of Information and Media Studies does not view the appeals process as an opportunity for students to solicit a second opinion on a grade assigned to a particular piece of work. Appeals must pertain to the final grade in a course, and will only be entertained if sufficient grounds for appeal can be met, including: medical or compassionate circumstances, a defect in the evaluation process, bias, inaccuracy or unfairness.

Stages in the Appeals Process:

The first stage of the process is a discussion of the disputed grade with the appropriate Teaching Assistant (if applicable), and subsequently, the course Instructor. For grades assigned to individual assignments, essays, lab reports, projects and tests completed throughout the term, the student first must appeal to the Teaching Assistant or Instructor of the course, within three weeks of the date on which the Instructor or Teaching Assistant returned the assignments to the class. The Appeals Committee will not hear any further appeals about the final grade in any course unless this first step has been taken.

If completion of the first stage has not resolved the matter, the student may appeal the final grade in the course to the FIMS Appeals Committee. Appeals of final grades must be **within the time frame indicated in the Undergraduate Calendar.** It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the appeal is submitted within the deadline. The student shall submit a formal letter to the FIMS Appeals Committee outlining the grounds for the appeal, the remedy sought and relevant materials including the information about when and with whom (Teaching Assistant and/or Instructor) the student met, as described in Stage 1. If the appeal involves a request for work to be regraded, the original marked work and a clean copy (if possible) must be included. If the appeal is commenced once the deadline has passed, it will not be considered either by the Appeals Committee or by the Associate Dean.

The FIMS Appeals Committee has the discretion to determine whether the grounds for appeal have been met.

If the Committee deems that the reasons for the appeal are not legitimate, the Associate Dean will be informed. The appeal will be terminated and the student will be informed.

If the Committee decides that the grounds for appeal have been met, the following steps will be taken:

1. the course Instructor will be shown the appeal letter and offered an opportunity to make a written response;
2. if work is to be regraded, a reader will be appointed who is competent in the area in question and was not involved in the assignment of the original mark. The reader will consider the work in question and will arrive at an independent evaluation. If there is a large discrepancy between the original mark and the regraded mark, a second reader may be appointed by the Committee. **If the appointed reader(s) arrive at a grade within five marks of the original, the original grade will stand.**

The FIMS Appeals Committee will review the evidence and will make a recommendation on the case to the Associate Dean Undergraduate.

The Associate Dean Undergraduate will consider the recommendation from the Appeals Committee, and will make a decision. The student and the instructor will be notified promptly and in writing by the Associate Dean of the decision and of the change in grade, if any. Within the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, the Associate Dean's decision on the matter is final.

Further appeals are possible under certain circumstances to the Senate Review Board Academic (for Undergraduate students) or to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (for Graduate students) but the student should carefully consult the guidelines regarding such Appeals.