ENGLISH 202B: Advanced Rhetoric and Composition: Writing in the Humanities

Logos in Love: Producing and Consuming Global Brand Identities

*Class time and location: 214 Hammond, T/TH 9:45 to 11:00 am
Section: 008 / Spring 2007

*Instructor: Matt Newcomb
Office location, phone, e-mail: 053 Burrowes Building, 865-1552, mjn154@psu.edu
(I'm easiest to reach by email).
Office Hours: Monday 10:00 am to 12:00 pm, Thursday 11:00 am to 12:00 pm.
Mailbox: 112 Burrowes Building (organized by last name)

Texts:

- Rivkin and Sutherland: The Making of a Name, The Inside Story of the Brands We Buy (MN)
- Perkins: Confessions of an Economic Hit Man (CEHM)
- Klein: No Logo (NL)
- Gibson: Pattern Recognition (PR)
- Course Packet of Readings (CP)
- Additional readings will be handed out or made available online throughout the semester.

Optional: College-level dictionary, handbook on documentation, citation, and bibliographic conventions, according to MLA (the Modern Language Association) or the MLA Handbook is a good idea. Used copies are available.

Computer Stuff: In addition to the texts, you need to have an active e-mail account. Obviously you also need to check that e-mail account regularly. We also will use a wiki regularly in this course. I will provide instructions on how wikis work in the first week of the course.

Course Description: Writing in the Humanities is an intensive reading and writing course. The practices of reading and writing cannot be separated from each other, nor can they be separated from the values, activities, and conditions that make up the various cultures we are part of. This section of English 202B will focus on the theme of global brands. Much of our lives and identities are made up by defining ourselves through what we consume. A great deal of rhetorical work (written and otherwise) is all about creating brand identities and selling products. It is a world of marketing—even of marketing yourself. An analysis of major brands and how they go about creating images will help us explore various rhetorical strategies. We will apply these strategies to our own writing, but will particularly focus on the ethical implications of different ways to create brands. We will also learn a great deal about the contexts of globalization around these brands. Students will be expected to write frequently and will choose their own topics at least loosely related to the course focus.

Thoughts on Writing: We are all writers, and often for different reasons. Cultural and personal values influence those reasons for writing and our styles of writing. However, writing is never a completely individual activity. We are all part of multiple discourse communities, which basically means that we all are part of different groups of people who communicate in particular ways. The community of your academic department has different norms for speaking and writing than the community of your church, sports team, or family. As writers, we must work to understand the rules and values of different discourse communities so we can write in ways that the community can