



**ADVERTISING CREATIVE
MEJO 371.1**

Professor Bill Cokas
REMOTE/CARROLL HALL 058
TR 8:00 – 9:15 PM

Syllabus/Course Information

Advertising Creative

MEJO 371.1

REMOTE (Carroll Hall Room 58)

TR 8:00 – 9:15 PM

Professor: Bill Cokas

Email cokas@ad.unc.edu

Phone: 919-961-6126 (cell)

Zoom office hours: TBD

What you should expect

This is an introductory course in advertising creative. If you do your job, and if I do mine, you should learn the fundamentals of the challenges facing aspiring industry hopefuls. At the end of the course you should have a clearer idea if this is something you'd like to pursue professionally, or at the very least, you should have an insight to and appreciation of the creative process, which will be useful no matter where you end up in life.

The pace in this class will be quick. There will be lectures, discussions, in-class exercises, guest speakers and occasional video presentations. These will cover a variety of topics designed to show you what it takes to visualize and write effective content for advertising across all media.

In this course you will:

- Gain a firm understanding of the role of a creative within the overall business environment, extending beyond communication to include concepting, visual storytelling, and research and testing
- Examine how copywriting and art direction work to both create and deliver brand messaging to customers through a variety of channels
- Learn the importance of branding, and sustaining brand relationships with customers based on fluid definitions of “value”
- Analyze the positive and negative social impacts of advertising, and the responsibility of writers and advertisers in specific categories
- Collaborate and critique creative solutions through the formation of teams

Inspiration

At the beginning of each class, one student will be asked to share something that's caught his/her attention, for whatever reason (good, bad, ineffective or offensive, anything is fair game). I'll work my way through the class roster so everyone will get a chance to present. Afterward, we'll discuss it informally as a class. I'll spring some on you myself when the opportunity presents itself.

Standards

All assignments must be neat and legible. Overnight assignments should be typed when applicable. A late assignment will be penalized one letter grade for each day it is late, and after one week will automatically be given an F. Late assignments resulting from a previously discussed absence will be given a brief penalty-free grace period.

And since we are in the journalism school, we must apply the same penalties to gross misspellings, flagrant grammatical or punctuation errors and shoddy research. Expect the same in the real world.

Copywriting is one of those "learn by doing" skills. The more you write, the better you'll write. When I graduated from UNC, I thought I was a really good writer. Now I know better. With that in mind, there will be an emphasis on developing your writing skills through volume, both in and out of class. Don't be intimidated by this—it's intended to loosen you up and dispel that feeling of dread every time you have to create. It's not like you'll be writing a term paper every week.

You'll be working with a partner much of the time, but not the same partner. That's how it's usually done "out there." Some partnerships will work better than others, but again, you'll be forced to reckon with interpersonal dynamics on the job, so why not get started here? And as in the real world, you'll be expected to present your own work most of the time, so be prepared to discuss or defend it, or to bask in its glow.

Working in Teams

During the first few weeks of class, I will give out a self-assessment form for each of you to complete. This will help me determine how to divide the teams. This will establish the organization for many of our in-class workshops and for the Team Pitch project.

Required Materials

Hey Whipple, Squeeze This (5th edition) by Luke Sullivan & Edward Boches

SAKAI

I will use Sakai for resources and additional readings not found in the required text. I will call your attention to these materials in class and/or via email sent through Sakai. I do not typically use Sakai for grade postings, since it's not reliable.

Course Requirements

To successfully complete this course, you are required to:

- Attend all classes
- Complete all required reading (and associated exercises)
- Complete one Team Pitch

Subjectivity

Advertising is by nature a subjective business. Therefore, my evaluations of your work will be completely subjective, albeit grounded in decades of experience both creating and judging both student and real-life work. However, you will not be writing to please me; you will be writing to fulfill the assignment and please yourself. Keep in mind I've been on both sides of this equation--as a student and as a professional. Criticism of your work is not criticism of you. Learn to accept my efforts to improve your work without taking it personally.

Talent

Do you have it? Everyone has it, to some degree. This course should help you discover your hidden creative talents and/or develop existing ones. Can you tell a good creative from bad creative? That's a talent right there, and one that will come in handy as you try to create concepts of your own.

In any case, you will not be judged solely on your wealth or dearth of innate talent. If you make a sincere effort to master the material covered and demonstrate a grasp of the concepts discussed, you will pass. If you continually blow me out of the water with your thinking and/or your writing and concepts, you could even get an "A." Conversely, if you think you can toss off something while you're hiding in your little Zoom window, waiting to be called on, don't be surprised if your grade reflects it. I've written very few (okay, none) ads on the way to a client meeting that got sold and produced. The key to tight solid writing is re-writing.

Grading Scale

Grades will be mathematically calculated on the following values:

A	4.0 (93-100)	C+	2.3 (78-80)	F	0.0 (Below 60)
A-	3.7 (90-92)	C	2.0 (73-77)		
B+	3.3 (88-90)	C-	1.7 (70-72)		
B	3.0 (83-87)	D+	1.3 (68-70)		
B-	2.7 (80-82)	D	1.0 (60-68)		

Your grade will result from the following:

In-Class/Homework Assignments	40%
Final Project	30%
Class Participation	20%
Individual Presentation	5%
Class Evaluation	5%

Given that, what earns an "A?" What earns an "F?"

- A** Work that has been meticulously researched or thought-out, then executed with attention to detail, target audience and strategy. Work that is surprising, engaging, fresh, inventive as well as relevant, intelligent and purposeful. Basically, a concept I could run virtually "as is." Only the most genius wordplay would ever be found in this category.
- B** This is work that exhibits glimpses of the greatness of above, but is lacking in one or more key areas. This kind of work would make it to the client, but only after some revisions. Maybe it's a great idea, but it's off-strategy. Maybe it's dead-on strategy, but it's creatively limp.
- C** This is work that fulfills the assignment, but without much spark or insight. These are the kinds of headlines you think of first, then you (should) wad them up and move on. It could be on-strategy and speak to the product's benefit, but in a completely unmemorable way. This kind of work goes to the client all the time, and it's called "wallpaper."
- D** This is work that probably wouldn't make it out of your creative director's office. It may not even be "revisable," due to key flaws in its disregard for the strategy or being completely off the mark creatively. The graveyard of lame wordplays, ads with no benefit and desperate, last-minute stabs in the dark.
- F** I know you're just beginning, but you know "F" work when you write it. This is work I'd be embarrassed to be associated with, either as a writer or a creative director. These are the kinds of ads the clients write for themselves. It's almost better to not write an ad than to knowingly create a bad one. Oddly enough, you can find plenty of "F" ads in real life, every day. Maybe you can rectify this after graduation.

Attendance and Participation

Your attendance and active participation in class is required, expected and worth 20% of your final grade. I realize this is significant, but engagement is critical in this remote setting. For this reason, it's not optional. Yes, some students naturally speak up more than others, but you need to make your presence known, much as you will need to do in a real job. If you spend your class time in class glancing at your phone or facing your webcam while cruising the internet instead, you will do yourself no favors. All lectures and assignments will be uploaded to Sakai within one day of class. I will try to return homework by the next class period, but occasionally it may take up to a week.

SEEKING HELP

If you need individual assistance, it is your responsibility to meet with me. If you are serious about wanting to improve your performance in this course, the time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem —whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability, or an illness.

DATE	TOPIC	ACTIVITY	READING
AUGUST 11	Be the solution: why everyone hates advertising	Movie: Art & Copy	<i>Whipple 1</i>
AUGUST 13	Creative Strategy		<i>Whipple 3</i>
AUGUST 18	Target Audience		<i>Whipple 2</i>
AUGUST 20	Unexpected Connections		<i>Whipple 4</i>
AUGUST 25	Principles of Print		<i>Whipple 9</i>
AUGUST 27	Creative Focus		<i>Whipple 5</i>
SEPTEMBER 1	Virtues of Simplicity/OOH		<i>Whipple 6</i>
SEPTEMBER 3	Storytelling & Platforms		<i>Whipple 8</i>
SEPTEMBER 8	Digital		<i>Whipple 10</i>

SEPTEMBER 10	Go Big or Go Weird	<i>Whipple 7</i>
SEPTEMBER 15	Go Big or Go Weird	<i>Whipple 12</i>
SEPTEMBER 17	Eye Candy	<i>Whipple 16</i>
SEPTEMBER 22	There Are No Words	<i>Whipple 16 (cont.)</i>
SEPTEMBER 24	TV & Video	
SEPTEMBER 29	Taglines	
OCTOBER 1	Campaigns	
OCTOBER 6	Research	Guest speaker
OCTOBER 8	Radio	<i>Whipple 17</i>
OCTOBER 13	Social Media	<i>Whipple 13</i>
OCTOBER 15	Rewarding Loyalty: Building Your Base	
OCTOBER 20	Finding Opportunity in a Crisis	

OCTOBER 22	The Ugly Truth & Reinvention	
OCTOBER 27	Social Responsibility: When is it Appropriate?	
OCTOBER 29	Celebrities, Influencers & Sponsorships: Can You Borrow Relevance?	
NOVEMBER 3	Leveraging Psychology	Guest speaker
NOVEMBER 5	Presenting/Protecting Your Work	<i>Whipple 19</i>
NOVEMBER 10	Group Sessions	
NOVEMBER 12	Group Sessions	
NOVEMBER 17	Group Sessions	
TBD	Campaign Pitches	

HONOR CODE:

I expect that each student will behave according to the guidelines of the University honor system (<http://honor.unc.edu>). All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that this University demands. You are expected to produce your own work in this class. Using a set-up sound bite is a violation of the honor code. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor's responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please see the course instructor or Senior Associate Dean C. A. Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the Department of Disability Services website at <http://disabilityservices.unc.edu/>

DIVERSITY

The University's policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined in the 2011-2012 Undergraduate Bulletin <http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/>. UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

ACCREDITATION

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication's accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program. Learn more about them here: <http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps>

SEPTEMBER 15	Go Big or Go Weird	<i>Whipple 12</i>
SEPTEMBER 17	Eye Candy	<i>Whipple 16</i>
SEPTEMBER 22	There Are No Words	<i>Whipple 16 (cont.)</i>
SEPTEMBER 24	TV & Video	
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NOVEMBER 10	Group Sessions	
NOVEMBER 12	Group Sessions	
NOVEMBER 17	Group Sessions	
December 8	Campaign Pitches, 8pm	

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