

Course Title: **Manipulation, Myth-making, and Marketing**

Area: Public Systems Group

PGP II, Elective Slot IX-X

Course Instructor: Navdeep Mathur, X-4406, E- navdeep@iimahd.ernet.in

### **Course Administration**

The course will have 10 classroom sessions of 75 minutes each. In some of the sessions students will be expected to present and discuss cases/readings.

Class Participation: 20%

Short Papers: 50%

Final Project: 30% (Group)

The course requires A/V facilities.

**Course Description and Objectives:** This course explores how the public sphere is shaped through the discourses, practices and strategies constituting the different elements of marketing as a social activity that includes but is not limited to the transaction of goods and services alone. The leading text on marketing management (Kotler, Keller, Koshy, and Jha 2013) articulates marketing as a “societal process” in which groups and individuals engage with each other to create and offer goods and services through communicative practices whereby they identify needs, wants and value. These leading authors identify the specific subjects of marketing as goods, services and “...events, experiences, persons, places, properties, organisations, information and ideas” on an equal footing (2013: 5).

These subjects represent a total perspective on how societal life is lived in the public sphere, with implications for life systems that are public in nature. To put it summarily, public systems can be said to be constituted by several elements that are part of this marketing worldview where decisions are made about the targeting/segmenting populations, identifying and valuing needs and wants, delivering goods and services, designing communications and disseminating information etc. These elements are an on-going political enactment of myths and storytelling that narrate the relationship between society, economy and the public.

A set of myths held together by an organizing storyline or metaphor constitute the mythologies through which actors in public space make sense of the world and thereby act on it as well as engage in creating it with others. The term myth is used here as a reference to systems of belief, espoused by social groups in furthering their worldviews. Manipulation refers to the means of achieving social goals through seeking transformations in worldviews, perspectives and values of groups and individuals.

The key objective of this course is to observe and analyse concrete processes and projects linking manipulation, myth-making and marketing in their implications for public life specifically encompassing themes of gender, public health, war and social violence, media and advertising, luxury, democracy and natural resources, mobility, and the environment. It focuses on the concrete potential of these three linked Ms towards crafting public welfare.

### **Session 1: Myth-making in the Public Sphere**

Nayar, Pramod K. 2009. Packaging Life: Cultures of the Everyday. Sage Publications (Introduction)

Barber, Benjamin. 2007. Consumed: How markets corrupt children, infantilize adults, and swallow citizens whole. Norton & Co. (Chapter 1: Capitalism Triumphant and the infantalist ethos)

### **Session 2: Birthing Consumers**

Lindstrom, Martin. 2011. Brandwashed: Tricks companies use to manipulate our minds and Persuade us to buy. Random House/Crown Business Books. (Chapter 1: Buy Buy Baby)

Barber, Benjamin. 2007. Consumed: How markets corrupt children, infantilize adults, and swallow citizens whole. Norton & Co. (Chapter 3: Infantilizing Consumer: The coming of kidults)

### **Session 3: Education as Consumer Experience**

Klein, Naomi. 2001. No Logo. Flamingo Press. (Chapter 4: The branding of learning: Ads in schools and universities)

Barbaro, Adriana and Jeremy Earp. 2008. Consuming Kids: The commercialization of childhood. Excerpt from documentary film

### **Session 4: Work as lifestyle of place, experience and organization**

Ritzer, George. 2011. The McDonaldization of Society. Pine Forge Press. (Chapter 6: Control – Human and Non-Human Robots)

Klein, Naomi. Chapter 10: Threats and temps – From working for nothing to “Free Agent Nation”

### **Session 5: Making Gender identity and social violence**

Kilbourne, Jean and Diane Levin. 2009. So Sexy, So Soon: The new sexualized childhood and what parents can do to protect their kids. Random House. (Chapter 2 – Never too young to be sexy: Living with Children in today’s sexualized world)- *To be distributed later.*

Kilbourne, Jean. 2010. Killing Us Softly 4. Documentary excerpts.

### **Session 6: Commodification of Public Health**

Nayar, Pramod K. Chapter 1: Life: The Low-Calorie Edition – Cultures of Health

Lindstrom. Chapter 8: Hope in a Jar – The price of health, happiness and spiritual enlightenment

### **Session 7: Citizenship as idealized form of consumption**

Mazzarella, William. 2003. *Shoveling Smoke: Advertising and Globalization in Contemporary India*. Oxford. (Chapter 7: Indian Fun – Constructing the Indian Consumer)

Barber. Chapter 4: Privatizing Citizens: The making of civic schizophrenia

### **Session 8: A Commercial-Public Sphere**

Barber. Chapter 6 – Totalizing Society: The end of diversity

Smart, Barry. 2010. *Consumer Society: Critical Issues and Environmental Consequences*. Sage. (Chapter 9 – Consuming Futures –II: ‘green’ and sustainable alternatives)

### **Session 9: The Mediatization of Public Culture**

Mazzarella. Chapter 1: Locations – Advertising and the New Swadeshi.

Gerbner G and Jean Kilbourne. 1994. *The killing screens: media and the culture of violence*. Excerpts from documentary film

### **Session 10: : Presentations of Final Projects**

### **Supplementary Readings/ Project Resources**

- Sen Gupta, Anuradha and Kuriyan, Priya. 2010. *Our Toxic World*. Sage.  
**Chapter 7:** Plastics: Material Mayhem, **Chapter 8:** Heavy Metals: Trail of destruction, **Chapter 9:** Food: Toxins at your table.
- Rampton, Sheldon and Stauber, John. 2002. *Trust Us, We’re Experts*. Penguin Putnam.  
**Chapter 3:** Deciding What You’ll Swallow, **Chapter 5:** Packaging the Beast, **Chapter 8:** The Best Science Money Can Buy, **Chapter 10:** Global Warming Is Good for You.
- Schlosser, Eric. 2002. *Fast Food Nation*. Penguin Books.  
**Chapter 2:** Your trusted friends, **Chapter 3:** Behind the counter, **Chapter 5:** Why the fries taste good.
- M.D., Kassirer, Jerome P. 2005. *On The Take How America’s Complicity with Big Business Can Endanger Your Health*. Oxford University Press.  
**Chapter 2:** Money-Warped Behavior.

### **Relationship of course with overall program objectives and related courses**

Consistent with the program objectives, the course seeks to provide students with knowledge and awareness of the intricate and inextricable linkages between the seemingly separate spheres of business management and public systems, and society. Thereby, it seeks to sensitise them to the very specific processes through which both spheres together constitute ‘society’ in a non-separable sort of way. It provides would-be managers with several analytical frameworks for

understanding the public consequences of private decisions. This course would supplement courses such as Socio-cultural environment of business, Investigating corporate social irresponsibility, Business ethics, Media and Society.