The Inclusion of Social Responsibility in the Visual Communications Curriculum

Case Study

Submitted by:
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"[Social responsibility] is important to our curriculum just as it is important to the advertising industry. Our curriculum mirrors the profession, so naturally social responsibility is part of it."

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Synopsis from official website <http://www.scad.edu>

The Savannah College of Art and Design was founded in Savannah, Ga., in 1978 with a curriculum designed to provide an excellent arts education and effective career preparation for students. Today, with three locations as well as online programs, the college continues to adhere to this mission, attracting students from all 50 states and from more than 90 countries.

SCAD exists to prepare talented students for professional careers, emphasizing learning through individual attention in a positively oriented university environment. The goal of the college is to nurture and cultivate the unique qualities of each student through an interesting curriculum, in an inspiring environment, under the leadership of involved professors.

Personal Interview

December 18, 2007

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Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) is one of only a few schools that offers a specific Advertising for Nonprofits class. Why is this class included as part of your program?

It is important that our program be designed to prepare people for careers in the advertising business, so we try to replicate real-life opportunities in the classroom, which includes doing projects for not for profit organizations.

Our graduates will work in the areas of branding and alternative media, so we have both of those classes on the menu as well. Currently the Advertising for Nonprofits class runs in the winter, but we plan to expand and offer it more often, as it is very popular.

Our nonprofit course really provides the students with the same motivation that drives most agencies to do their nonprofit or pro bono work. In my experience agencies have two motives for doing this type of work: first to clear their conscience and do some good for a more noble cause, and secondly for the creative freedom that these projects provide.

Are there challenges to working with a nonprofit client?

At times. The clients we've worked with almost always love the work we present, and want to move forward in completing the projects. However, we do run into issues when we come to the end of the quarter and need to move on to the next thing, and the client hasn't provided us with all the assets needed to complete the project. It's very difficult for students to continue with client revisions and taking the project to production after the class has ended. This just isn't conducive to the academic term.

How do you work through that?

I try very hard to manage the expectations of the clients. I tell them we have a 10 week engagement, and we will do a hand off of their project at the end of the 10 weeks. Sometimes our students will create a small freelance agency to continue working with clients after the session is over to ensure the projects get completed.

Is this type of experience beneficial to the students?

It's very beneficial. These projects end up in their portfolios and on their resumes as real-world, real-client experiences. Also, the students get the opportunity to present to a real client. There's no greater thrill than giving a great presentation, and having the client love everything. Then there are the times when the process gets frustrating, and that experience is beneficial to the students as well.

Another benefit is that students must take into consideration the typically small budget that NPOs often have. These projects make them have to think of more creative and cost effective ways to get the client's message out.

How do you attract NPOs to work with?

The ideal situation would be that the nonprofits approach us to work with them. We don't have that kind of PR support in place at the moment. I feel that if we publicized these opportunities more effectively year after year, clients would begin to come to us for specific projects.

For now, I research which clients I want to bring into the classroom, and then pitch them to work with us. The problem is that it's time consuming, but I've had great success with finding clients this way. Our school has a very good reputation locally, and I find that the NPOs are generally very receptive to working with us.

Is it a criteria that the NPOs have a budget to produce the work your students create?

It hasn't been. Most NPOs are known not to have much of a budget and want to produce everything on the cheap. As part of the initial client meeting we ask that the NPO show us some of the things they've been doing and oftentimes that is quite telling of what types of budgets they've been working with.

In order to get some projects produced, I've contacted media suppliers and asked them if they would donate space for our nonprofit client, Oftentimes they say yes. It's just another way to offer the client a complete package and help ensure that the student's projects get produced.

How do you feel these types of projects resonate with your students?

Generation Y seems to be more engaged than their predecessors. They seem to be particularly interested in social issues and ethics, and are generally concerned about going into the advertising business for the sole purpose of encouraging consumption and convincing people to buy more things.

It used to be that students decided to pursue the field of advertising so they could work on large national accounts and make lots of money. Now I'm noticing quite a lot of students saying they want to go into this business to do work that is more socially responsible. They are interested in knowing where they can go to work on socially responsible projects and how they can get those types of projects into their portfolios.

This is encouraging to me because these young people believe they can change the world, and you truly have to believe that in order to make it happen.

Course Description

ADVE 355 Not-for-Profit Advertising
This class discusses and debates a number of contemporary social issues, including environmental, preventative health, education, community well being, and corporate exploitation. Students are required to research issues from all sides, develop written plans and marketing strategies, and create a body of socially-conscious advertising campaigns and materials that communicate an expansive view to the public. The course also touches on the history of PSAs (Public Service Announcements) and protest or propaganda advertising in this country and around the world.
Prerequisite: ADVE 304.

Course Syllabus

Quarter/Year: Winter 2006

Course Number, Title, and Section: ADVE 355 - 02 Not-for-Profit Advertising

Course Description: This class will discuss and debate a number of contemporary social issues, including environmental, preventative health, education, community well being, and corporate exploitation. Students will be required to research issues from all sides, develop written plans and marketing strategies, and create a body of socially-conscious advertising campaigns and materials that communicate an expansive view to the public. The course will also touch on the history of PSAs (Public Service Announcements) and protest or propaganda advertising in this country and around the world.

Course Goals: The following course goals articulate the general objectives and purpose of this course:
· Introduce students to the role not-for-profit advertising plays in the advertising industry
· Provide a working knowledge of the range of not-for-profit advertising types in use
· Generate an understanding of how not-for-profit advertising campaigns are developed
· Give students first-hand experience creating a not-for-profit advertising campaign
· Develop sample not-for-profit advertising campaigns for the student's portfolio

Course Outcomes: The following course outcomes indicate competencies and measurable skills that students develop as a result of completing this course:
· Students will understand the role not-for-profit advertising plays in the advertising industry
· Students will demonstrate a working knowledge of the range of not-for-profit advertising
· Students will understand the how not-for-profit advertising campaigns are developed
· Students will have first-hand experience creating a not-for-profit advertising campaign
· Students will have sample not-for-profit advertising campaigns for their portfolios

Required Text(s): *The Tipping Point,* Gladwell, Malcolm

Recommended Text(s): *Strategic Marketing for Non-Profit Organizations*, Andreason & Kotler

Schedule of Classes: The instructor may make changes to the schedule. Changes in projects or lectures will be announced in class in advance, posted online and handed out. Students are expected to note changes when they are announced.

Class 1: Wed., January 4
· Introductions, photos and course overview
· Discussion: Not-for-profit advertising and our personal experiences
· Launch Assignment A: National PSA Campaign
· Purchase course textbook
· Read for Monday: TIPPING POINT, Introduction and Chapter One (1 - 29)

Class 2: Mon., January 9
· Discuss reading: TIPPING POINT, Introduction and Chapter One (1 - 29)
· Lecture/Presentation: PSA Case Study

Class 3: Wed., January 11
· Due: Initial research summary for Assignment A: National PSA Campaign
· Lab time for work-in-progress on Assignment A: National PSA Campaign
· Read for Monday: TIPPING POINT, Chapter Two (30 - 88)

Class 4: Mon., January 16
· Discuss reading: TIPPING POINT, Chapter Two (30 - 88)
· Lecture/Presentation: PSA Case Study

Class 5: Wed., January 18
· Due: First-round concepts for Assignment A: National PSA Campaign
· Lab time for work-in-progress on Assignment A: National PSA Campaign
· Read for Monday: TIPPING POINT, Chapter Three (89 - 132)

Class 6: Mon., January 23
· Discuss reading: TIPPING POINT, Chapter Three (89 - 132)
· Lecture/Presentation: PSA Case Study

Class 7: Wed., January 25
· Due: Adlobs for Assignment A: National PSA Campaign
· Lab time for work-in-progress on Assignment A: National PSA Campaign
· Read for Monday: TIPPING POINT, Chapter Four (133 - 168)

Class 8: Mon., January 30
· Discuss reading: TIPPING POINT, Chapter Four (133 - 168)
· Lecture/Presentation: PSA Case Study

Class 9: Wed., February 1
· Due: Near-final layouts for Assignment A: National PSA Campaign
· Lab time for work-in-progress on Assignment A: National PSA Campaign
· Launch Assignment B: Local PSA Campaign
· Read for Monday: TIPPING POINT, Chapter Five (167 - 192)

Class 10: Mon., February 6
· Discuss reading: TIPPING POINT, Chapter Five (167 - 192)
· Lecture/Presentation: PSA Case Study

Class 11: Wed., February 8
· Due: Present and hand-in Assignment A: National PSA Campaign
· Lab time for work-in-progress on Assignment B: Local PSA Campaign
· Read for Monday: TIPPING POINT, Chapter Six (193 - 215)

Class 12: Mon., February 13
- Discuss reading: TIPPING POINT, Chapter Six (193 - 215)
- Return Assignment A: National PSA Campaign with evaluation and grade

Class 13: Wed., February 15
- Due: Research insights and creative strategy for Assignment B: Local PSA Campaign
- Lab time for work-in-progress on Assignment B: Local PSA Campaign
- Read for Monday: TIPPING POINT, Chapter Seven (216 - 252)

Class 14: Mon., February 20
- Discuss reading: TIPPING POINT, Chapter Seven (216 - 252)
- Follow-up for One Show Awards Entry for Assignment A: National PSA Campaign

Class 15: Wed., February 22
- Due: Concept sketches for Assignment B: Local PSA Campaign
- Lab time for work-in-progress on Assignment B: Local PSA Campaign
- Read for Monday: TIPPING POINT, Chapter Eight (253 - 259)

Class 16: Mon., February 27
- Discuss reading: TIPPING POINT, Chapter Eight (253 - 259)
- Follow-up for One Show Awards Entry for Assignment A: National PSA Campaign

Class 17: Wed., March 1
- Due: Adlobs for Assignment B: Local PSA Campaign
- Lab time for work-in-progress on Assignment B: Local PSA Campaign
- Read for Monday: TIPPING POINT, Afterword (261 - 280)

Class 18: Mon., March 6
- Discuss reading: TIPPING POINT, Afterword (261 - 280)
- Workshop: Presentation Skills

Class 19: Wed., March 8
- Due: Present and hand-in Assignment B: Local PSA Campaign

Class 20: Mon., March 13
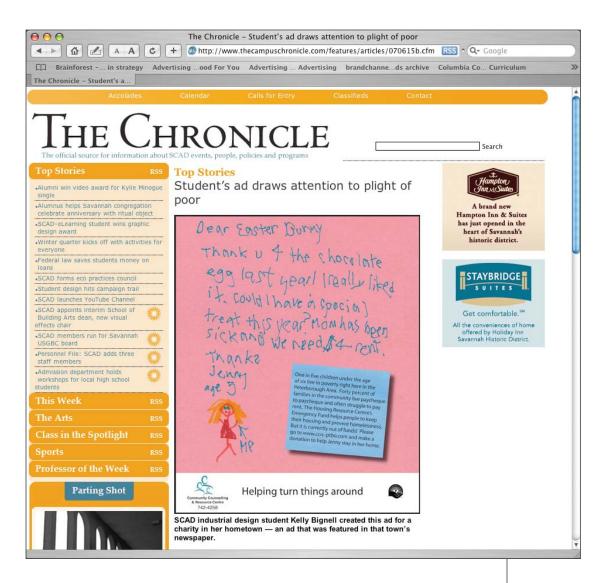- Return Assignment B: Local PSA Campaign with evaluation and grade

Field Trip: TBA

Revised December 2005

News

Savannah College of Art and Design's advertising class addresses the challenges of homelessness through integrated marketing campaigns. Read the entire article: http://www.thecampuschronicle.com/communique/spotlight/070209a.cfm

Savannah College of Art and Design student Kelly Bignell's public service advertisement gets published in her hometown's newspaper. Read the entire article: http://www.thecampuschronicle.com/features/articles/070615b.cfm

Savannah College of Art and Design's advertising and film departments collaborate on a public service announcement to benefit women in the arts. Read the entire article: http://www.thecampuschronicle.com/communique/spotlight/070323a.cfm

Project: Homelessness

Savannah College of Art and Design's advertising students were assigned the task of researching a charitable organization that provides services and aid to the homeless, and creating integrated marketing campaigns that included as least three types of media. Each campaign's goal was to solicit from their target audience a $1 donation towards the organization that they were promoting.
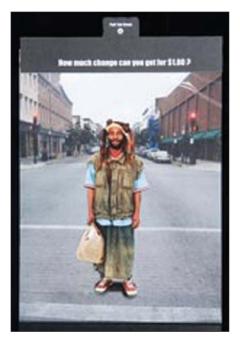

Mami Serwaa Lundy,
Oakland, California

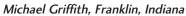Mami Serwaa Lundy's campaign also includes a card that reads, "Thank you for being part of our solution."

Matthew Richardson,
Newnan, Georgia

Christina Romero,
Miami, Florida

Michael Griffith, Franklin, Indiana

Michael Griffith's campaign also included direct-mail pieces, a banner, posters and donation boxes featuring a graduate of the Old Savannah City Mission's job and housing assistance program.

Griffith continues to provide his services to the mission. He has designed their new logo, and created a tagline that reads "Help us help others." He also helped organize a food and clothing drive as well.

Chad Fisher, Coppell, Texas

Chad Fisher, who based his campaign on a piggy bank concept, said, "I want to impact, inform and make it as easy as possible for them to donate."