

COMMRC 1732 MARKETING EXPERIENCE ECONOMY

Independent Activity: The Staged Experience. Instructions for Week 5 and 6.

For the whole of week 5 and the beginning of week 6 the class will be run differently and these instructions will explain in detail how it will work. Week 5 is a two-part activity. You'll need a *planning* stage and an *execution* stage.

Tuesday February 5th [Planning Stage]

The class will not meet in the classroom. However, I want you to pair up in advance and conduct a Field Exercise (in your pairs) on or near the allocated classroom time, 4-5pm.

It is best to read the readings for that week, by Hutson and Williams, on or *before* Tuesday. They are available now on the Wiki. The readings deal with the way that advertising has unusual effects on the brain. Williams' article deals with the history of advertising as part of the rapid acceleration of communications, but that the overall effect is one of 'magic': a system of magical inducements and satisfactions. The Hutson reading takes up from this point, and written for a popular science audience explores how these ideas might work at the interface of 'social cognition', and may be empirically testable through things such as 'neuromarketing' studies.

The question you will address next week: *How does the 'staged experience' fit into this system?*

Are there are strong demographic, economic and political reasons why a system of magical inducements and satisfactions exists in the first place? There is no shortage of examples or further expansions into our social life and everyday experience, and this simply must work or else it would all stop. You are already aware of contemporary examples of this 'magical system' that runs between retail spaces, advertisements in the media, and perhaps the more creative ways that staged experiences feed into all this.

Therefore in your pairs you will brainstorm a list of suitable examples that you wish to follow along the chain, as it were. With the help of the internet and your collective knowledge as a pair, come up with a suitable example of a physical site which hosts a product or brand, that stages an experience, one that you can examine in terms of a current advertising or marketing campaign, and whose history as a product and/or brand you can begin to investigate. What I'm after is a horizontal 'snapshot' of how a product is conceived and enters into this magical system, and how experiences are staged for consumers either in retail stores or through everyday encounters. Are you aware of any special strategies like stealth marketing being employed, or anything that makes the product stand out in terms of *experience*? Referring back to Pine and Gilmore, what *kinds* of experiences are being fostered? Think creatively, as points will be given for originality or adventurousness.

Thursday February 7th [Execution Stage]

You will physically go in your pairs to ONE site that you deem most suitable and conduct 'fieldwork' (like an anthropologist or ethnographer), taking careful notes and photographs if you can, so that you are able to provide a written 'walkthrough' of the experience for someone who isn't aware of this campaign/product. Therefore, the more carefully you think about the site in advance, and the more detailed the notes and documentation, the easier it will be to re-create and re-describe the experience.

Subsequently, in place of a class discussion of the texts, I want you to prepare 2-page report based on this field activity that you will hand in on February 14th. This can also be written in pairs, or individually if that's easier. Feel free to use photographs or diagrams in an appendix. Be sure to come up with a *rationale* for deciding the site and your approach.

Week 7. Tuesday February 11th

The class will meet as usual. I hope to be back in time for this class, but if not the lecture will be delivered to the classroom through internet magic.