Assignment 1: Subvertisment

For this assignment, you will try your hand at “culture jamming” by using Photoshop to create three subvertisements. These can be either separate images or a series of images that raise awareness about a social or political issue, set of corporate practices, or the implications of an advertisement or brand marketing campaign. You will be graded less on your technical or aesthetic abilities than on the amount of thought and energy that goes into crafting a message that will get people thinking.

Your piece can take many forms. For example, you can parody a brand or product ad campaign to raise awareness about an issue:

![Image of subvertisements](image_url)
Or the brand itself:

You can subvert a product's packaging (or spoof packaging in general):
You can critique a common advertising/marketing practice:

There are more options than these!

Along with your image(s), the fulfillment of this assignment requires a minimum 500 word artist statement of purpose and process uploaded to Moodle. You should document your conceptual journey (did you have early ideas that you discarded? why? how did you choose and finalize your final concepts?) What were you trying to achieve and how did you go about it (where did you get your images, what tools in Photoshop did you use to create your image, etc.)?
Guidance for Starting this Assignment

Culture jamming is based in the exposure of the reality behind the spectacle often through the juxtaposition or arrangement of images and words in a surprising way that imparts a new meaning. It can be as simple as changing the text on a familiar image or changing the image behind a well-known name:

![Example of culture jamming](image)

By starting to think through what the parodists above needed to do in Photoshop to execute even these simple ideas (i.e., eliminate the old type—perhaps by filling in the background image with the clone stamp, pattern stamp or healing brush tool, figure out the appropriate type font and color, etc.), you can begin to get a sense of how to start putting your first assignment together. But first you need an idea …

Where to Begin?

1. Is there an issue that you believe deserves more attention, thought, airtime? Perhaps it is related to the environment, health, politics, gender or racial equity, education, etc. Begin by thinking about those cultural institutions, people, or products that exacerbate rather than help the problem. Perhaps it’s a corporation that is notorious for sweatshops or pollution. It might be a television show, movie, or magazine that perpetuates negative stereotypes. Maybe it’s the way the government kowtows to a particular lobby or interest group.

2. Whatever the issue, start to pinpoint the visual images or words that are emblematic of that cultural institution, person product. It might be a logo or other icon (i.e., McDonald’s yellow arches), a visual campaign series (the IPod silhouettes), a symbol (the American flag), a slogan (“It’s the Real Thing”; “Think Different”).

3. Start sketching out ways of combining those images, logos, and slogans with other elements in order to express the message that you want to convey. Make a list and search for the elements you need. If you use an image search engine like Google Image (http://images.google.com/), it’s best to choose as large an image as possible.

Questions That You Might Have:

**How big should my image be?**

It depends; for example, if you are altering an advertisement, then the advertisement itself will dictate the size and shape (make sure to find the largest version that you can or better yet, scan it from a magazine). However, if you
are creating an ad parody from scratch or collage or other image in which you can decide the size and shape and you think that you might eventually want to print it out and post it somewhere, then standard letter size (9 x 11 inches or 648 x 792 pixels) might be a good choice (or larger if you’d like to create more of a poster).

What format and resolution should my image be?

If you are going to do nothing more with your image than submit it to be shown in class OR if you are going to post it on the internet, then your image need only be the resolution of the computer screen, which is 72 dpi (dots per inch; you can check this under Image –> Image Size) AND (only after you are completely finished creating your image) you should convert it to a .jpeg (before you do this, you will need to flatten all the layers). If you are going to print it, then you might want to keep it as a .tiff and the resolution should be 200 dpi or more (keep in mind that when your image is more than 72 dpi, it looks larger on the screen than its actual printing size).

How many elements should I combine?

Again, that depends. Obviously, the fewer elements you have, the easier the image. If you choose to execute a relatively simple image, then you might want to think about creating a series (as in the Ipod/Iraq campaign). Of greatest importance is first, how well you have thought through your concept (and this will be conveyed, in part, through your media journal) and second, how well you have thought through your execution (does everything in your image including the various elements that you have brought together, the tagline (if any), the type font, the elements that you have chosen, and the way they are arranged contribute to the message that you are trying to send)?

What if I get stuck?

If you are working in the lab during the day, you can ask for assistance from one of the cage workers. There are numerous tutorials on Photoshop on Adobe’s website as well as on YouTube.