ENC 1102 – Crovitz

INQUIRY: ARGUMENTS IN ADVERTISING

Background:

We are bombarded by different forms of argument every day; one of the most pervasive (widespread) forms of argument we encounter in our culture is advertising. America is not only a democracy, but a capitalistic and consumerist society, and advertising has been called the "rhetoric of democracy." Gaining an understanding of the purposes, strategies, and methods of this kind of argument will help us become better critical thinkers and more discerning citizens.

Assignment:

Write a 1000-1500 word computer-drafted essay that carefully examines the explicit and implicit arguments of a print advertisement. You will choose your own text for analysis (with instructor approval).

The idea of explicit and implicit arguments we talked about when analyzing *Fight Club* will be our focus here as well. Here's a refresher of these concepts for advertising:

Explicit Argument in an Ad: Explicit can mean "clearly seen, voiced, or explained" or "concrete." Almost all ads have the same basic explicit argument: "You should buy our product." Like all arguments, advertisements can use three kinds of appeals to their audience to support their basic position. Some will use logical appeal (claims, reasons, and evidence), others ethical appeal (coming across as fair-minded and truthful), and still others will rely on emotional appeal (colors, images, the connotations of words), or a combination of these three appeals. In your analysis, you should look for the specific kinds of appeals used in your advertisement.

Implicit Argument in an Ad: Implicit means "implied" or "not voiced, but intended." Implicit arguments are often assumptions (also known as warrants) made about people, relationships, culture, and ideas, that underlie all arguments. It is important to investigate these assumptions, in order to fully understand the motivations of an arguer. Ask yourself what assumptions are made in your advertisement, and why they are there: how do they reinforce the explicit argument?

The result of analyzing your ad should be an evaluation of two ideas:

- Are the arguments in the advertisement credible?
- Are the arguments in the advertisements effective?

Credible (credibility) means an argument is logically sound and well-supported with strong evidence.

Effective (effectiveness) means an argument works in convincing or persuading its audience. Many arguments that are effective are also credible…but there are also many that aren't.
Suggested Structure:
1. An introduction that presents the advertisement, the company, the product, and the target audience, and suggests a map and purpose for the essay
2. An examination of explicit arguments made in the text
3. An examination of implicit arguments made in the text
4. A cohesive conclusion that evaluates credibility and effectiveness, and suggests the larger importance of your analysis
You must incorporate the following into your essay:

- an appropriate academic tone
- a well-rounded presentation of the ad's argument
- a clear organization that guides the reader
- specific examples and support
- knowledge of argument techniques and logic
- awareness of social issues and assumptions

Process: You will use pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading techniques to write this essay. Your rough draft will be reviewed by both the instructor and other students. All material and writing related to this assignment should be kept neatly in your writing portfolio, which will also be evaluated during the course.

Please note the following:

- All drafts must be computer-produced.
- All written material related to the essay must be turned in with the final draft.
- No essay will be accepted without evidence of process, or after Mar. 2

Assignment Due Date: Friday, Mar. 1, 2002