Ethics
Learning outcomes

‣ Understand some of the key ethical debates within the discipline
‣ Define an ethical approach to graphic arts practice
‣ Analyse advertising communication from an ethical perspective
What is ethics?
Definitions

Moral [adjective]
Concerned with goodness or badness of human character or behavior or with the distinction between right and wrong.

Ethics [noun]
moral philosophy, moral principles

Ethical [adjective]
relating to morals, morally correct
Definitions

Moral [adjective] PERSONAL
Concerned with goodness or badness of human character or behavior or with the distinction between right and wrong.

Ethics [noun] SOCIAL
Moral philosophy, moral principles
Ethics and graphic arts
The Hidden Persuaders, Vance Packard 1957
Design for the real world : human ecology and social change, Victor Papanek 1971
The Green imperative : ecology and ethics in design and architecture, Victor Papanek 1995
“There are professions more harmful than industrial design, but only a few.”
1960’s saw the advent of the socially conscious designer.

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), Ken Garland 1962–66
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), Ken Garland 1962–66
A manifesto

We, the undersigned, are graphic designers, photographers and students who have been brought up in a world in which the techniques and apparatus of advertising have persistently been presented to us as the most lucrative, effective and desirable means of using our talents. We have been bombarded with publications devoted to this belief, applauding the work of those who have flogged their skill and imagination to sell such things as:
cat food, stomach powders, detergent, hair restorer, striped toothpaste, aftershave lotion, before shave lotion, slimming diets, fattening diets, deodorants, fizzy water, cigarettes, roll-ons, pull-ons and slip-ons.

By far the greatest time and effort of those working in the advertising industry are wasted on these trivial purposes, which contribute little or nothing to our national prosperity.

In common with an increasing number of the general public, we have reached a saturation point at which the high pitched scream of consumer selling is no more than sheer noise. We think that there are other things more worth using our skill and experience on. There are signs for streets and buildings, books and periodicals, catalogues, instructional manuals, industrial photography, educational aids, films, television features, scientific and industrial publications and all the other media through which we promote our trade, our education, our culture and our greater awareness of the world.

We do not advocate the abolition of high pressure consumer advertising: this is not feasible. Nor do we want to take any of the fun out of life. But we are proposing a reversal of priorities in favour of the more useful and more lasting forms of communication. We hope that our

Edward Wright
Geoffrey White
William Slack
Caroline Rawlence
Ian McLaren
Sam Lambert
Ivor Kamlish
Gerald Jones
Bernard Highton
Brian Grimby
John Garner
Ken Garland
Anthony Froshaug
Robin Fior
Germano Facetti
Ivan Dodd
Harriet Crowder
Anthony Clift
Gerry Cinnamon
Robert Chapman
Ray Carpenter
Ken Briggs

Written and proclaimed at the Institute of Contemporary Arts on an evening in December 1963, the first manifesto was published in January 1964.

Source: http://www.kengarland.co.uk
Colors Magazine, Tibor Kalman 1991
“I’ll be long gone before some smart person ever figures out what happened inside this oval office.”

Excerpt from an interview with George W. Bush, wishing you a positive new year.

Jonathan Barnbrook
We, the undersigned, are graphic designers, art directors and visual communicators who have been raised in a world in which the techniques and apparatus of advertising have persistently been presented to us as the most lucrative, effective and desirable use of our talents. Many design teachers and mentors promote this belief; the market rewards it; a tide of books and publications reinforces it.

Encouraged in this direction, designers then apply their skill and imagination to sell dog biscuits, designer coffee, diamonds, detergents, hair gel, cigarettes, credit cards, sneakers, butt toners, light beer and heavy-duty recreational vehicles. Commercial work has always paid the bills, but many graphic designers have now let it become, in large measure, what graphic designers do. This, in turn, is how the world perceives design. The profession’s time and energy is used up manufacturing demand for things that are inessential at best.

Many of us have grown increasingly uncomfortable with this view of design. Designers who devote their efforts primarily to advertising, marketing and brand development are supporting, and implicitly endorsing, a mental environment so saturated with commercial messages that it is changing the very way citizen-consumers speak, think, feel, respond and interact. To some extent we are all helping draft a reductive and immeasurably harmful code of public discourse.

There are pursuits more worthy of our problem-solving skills. Unprecedented environmental, social and cultural crises demand our attention. Many cultural interventions, social marketing campaigns, books, magazines, exhibitions, educational tools, television programmes, films, charitable causes and other information design projects urgently require our expertise and help.

Reprinted by Adbusters in 2000 and signed by a new generation of designers.

We propose a reversal of priorities in favour of more useful, lasting and democratic forms of communication – a mindshift away from product marketing and toward the exploration and production of a new kind of meaning. The scope of debate is shrinking; it must expand. Consumerism is running uncontested; it must be challenged by other perspectives expressed, in part, through the visual languages and resources of design.

In 1964, 22 visual communicators signed the original call for our skills to be put to worthwhile use. With the explosive growth of global commercial culture, their message has only grown more urgent. Today, we renew their manifesto in expectation that no more decades will pass before it is taken to heart.

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Max Bruinsma
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Tuesday, 20 November 12
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“Extraordinarily beautiful things for the cultural elite” – How representative are these signatories?

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Source:
10 Footnotes to a Manifesto
by Michael Bieruit 2000
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Source: 10 Footnotes to a Manifesto by Michael Bieruit 2000

First Things First Manifesto 2000

“This litany of gruesome products has one thing in common: they are all things with which normal people are likely to be familiar”
First Things First Manifesto 2000

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Many visual communicators have discovered a new and more useful, lasting and democratic forms of communication that are not tied to product marketing and toward the exploration and production of a new kind of meaning. The scope of debate is shrinking; it must expand. Consumerism is running uncontested; it must be challenged by other perspectives expressed, in part, through the visual languages and resources of design.

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Source: 10 Footnotes to a Manifesto by Michael Bieruit 2000

What is an ethical approach?
What might be some of the common ethical issues that you might encounter as a Graphic Artist?
1. Personal

2. Professional

3. Social/Political
3. Social/Political
2. Professional
1. Personal
1. Personal

Poster designed for School of Visual Arts
James Victore quoting Rainer Maria Rilke
3. Social/Political
2. Professional
1. Personal
2. Professional

Source: pbs.org
Respect other designers in fair / open competition
Be honest in describing your professional experience and competencies
Avoiding any type of conflict of interest
Acquainting yourself with each client’s business and providing honest and impartial advice
Maintaining the confidentiality client info
Eliminating hidden compensation or kickback
Maintaining commitment to the development of innovative work of the highest quality
Rejecting all forms of plagiarism
Making proper acknowledgment of authorship when others have collaborated with you in creating a design
Professional Associations

American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA)
AIGA (UK)
Graphic Artists Guild
Industrial Designers Society of America
Society of Graphic Designers of Canada
Australian Graphic Design Association
http://www.aiga.org/standards-professional-practice/
AIGA Code of practice

6.1
A professional designer shall avoid projects that will result in harm to the public.

6.2
A professional designer shall communicate the truth in all situations and at all times; his or her work shall not make false claims nor knowingly misinform. A professional designer shall represent messages in a clear manner in all forms of communication design and avoid false, misleading and deceptive promotion.

6.3
A professional designer shall respect the dignity of all audiences and shall value individual differences even as they avoid depicting or stereotyping people or groups of people in a negative or dehumanizing way. A professional designer shall strive to be sensitive to cultural values and beliefs and engages in fair and balanced communication design that fosters and encourages mutual understanding.
AIGA Code of practice

7.2 A professional designer is encouraged to contribute five percent of his or her time to projects in the public good—projects that serve society and improve the human experience.

7.3 A professional designer shall consider environmental, economic, social and cultural implications of his or her work and minimize the adverse impacts.

7.4 A professional designer shall not knowingly accept instructions from a client or employer that involve infringement of another person's or group's human rights or property rights without permission of such other person or group, or consciously act in any manner involving any such infringement.

7.5 A professional designer shall not knowingly make use of goods or services offered by manufacturers, suppliers or contractors that are accompanied by an obligation that is substantively detrimental to the best interests of his or her client, society or the environment.

7.6 A professional designer shall refuse to engage in or countenance discrimination on the basis of race, sex, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability.
Encompasses professional expertise in such areas as accessibility, usability, consumer safety and environmental practices.
Citizen Designer: Perspectives on Design Responsibility
Forty essays about the role of designers in social and political change; edited by Steven Heller and Veronique Vienne; published in 2003 by Watson-Guptill.
12 Steps on the Graphic Designer's Road to Hell

1. Designing a package to look bigger on the shelf.
2. Designing an ad for a slow, boring film to make it seem like a lighthearted comedy.
3. Designing a crest for a new vineyard to suggest that it has been in business for a long time.
4. Designing a jacket for a book whose sexual content you find personally repellant.
5. Designing a medal using steel from the World Trade Center to be sold as a profit-making souvenir of September 11.
6. Designing an advertising campaign for a company with a history of known discrimination in minority hiring.
7. Designing a package aimed at children for a cereal whose contents you know are low in nutritional value and high in sugar.
8. Designing a line of T-shirts for a manufacturer that employs child labor.
9. Designing a promotion for a diet product that you know doesn't work.
10. Designing an ad for a political candidate whose policies you believe would be harmful to the general public.
11. Designing a brochure for an SUV that flips over frequently in emergency conditions and is known to have killed 150 people.
12. Designing an ad for a product whose frequent use could result in the user's death.
“The High Noon moment when we are asked to misrepresent the truth comes only rarely for most graphic artists”

Source:
10 Footnotes to a Manifesto
by Michael Bieruit 2000
Ray and Charles Eames posing with a sculpture made from a moulded plywood splint for their 1944 Christmas card.
Power of Ten film: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38ti9Bjiyvs
1. You
Question: What are your ethical beliefs? What matters to you?

2. Your client
Question: What sort of businesses do you want to be involved with?

3. Your specifications
Question: What’s the impact of your work on the environment/society? What’s your responsibility?

4. Your creation
What’s the purpose of your work / What is it promoting or communicating?
Exercise
Questions

1. What potential ethical issues might the following advertising images raise?

2. What info. do you need to make an informed criticism?
Calvin Klein

introducing boys' and girls' underwear
HANDBAG € 32.-
Food for a week € 4.-

Text 'aid' to 2255 and donate € 1.50
Week 8 task
Choose one of the three images posted on blackboard and discuss it from an ethical perspective.

Ask yourself why this image/object is potentially problematic and discuss this in 500 words. Think about the subjects discussed in the seminar but do not limit your discussion to these only. The discussion needs to be substantiated by at least 2 academic sources from which you should use relevant quotes to support what you are saying.
Cheers Bierut – Johnnie Walker
Sources – WEBCAT

https://www-lib.soton.ac.uk