

Assignment II, Part 1

**Facebook Project:
Text, Conscious Subtext
& Unconscious Subtext**

**Fall 2012, Art 081 231
Rutgers University
Mason Gross School of the
Arts**

**Lindsay Nordell
lnordell@gmail.com**

**Section 1 WF 12:00–3:00pm
Section 2 WF 3:20–6:30pm**

**Jack Henrie Fisher
jackhenriefisher@gmail.com**

**Section 3 WF 3:20–6:30pm
Section 4 WF 12:00–3:00pm**

Office hours by appointment.

The goal of this assignment is to understand the aesthetic choices we make, and how we use design to convey aspects of our personalities. The goal is also to analyze a designed object, to understand the motivations behind design choices, and to judge their success.

Choose four profile photos from Facebook. These should be taken from profiles of people you don't know, your friends don't know, and who don't go to Rutgers. It can be an image of anything, as long as someone is using the image as a Facebook profile.

Make three lists. They should be entitled **TEXT, CONSCIOUS SUBTEXT & UNCONSCIOUS SUBTEXT**.

Under **TEXT**, write what is explicitly obvious in each photo, the most literal possible reading of each photo. What is the gender of the person in the photo, if your subject has made it obvious? If they're wearing sports paraphernalia, the text would be that they support that team or school, etc. This list will be relatively short.

Under **CONSCIOUS SUBTEXT**, write down everything that you think the person is trying to convey about him or herself with the photo. Are they funny, attractive, unique, macho, popular, shy, smart, etc? What are the specific aspects of each photo that support this impression? Expression, body language, styling, color, layout, other people in the photo, etc.

Under **UNCONSCIOUS SUBTEXT**, write down everything that the person is actually conveying about him or herself. Why does your subject feel a need to convey this about him or herself? Does it undercut his or her intentions? Think about the Shakespeare quote "The lady doth protest too much." Does this apply here? Again, what are the specific aspects of each photo that support this impression? Are there specific aspects? Is it sometimes an overall impression?

Although these unconscious aspects will skew negative, they need not always; certainly people can convey positive attributes about themselves unintentionally, but this is probably much less common.

Process

Step 1: Print out all photos as 3 x 3." Place them on an 8.5 x 11" sheet of paper. Exact placement is up to you, but make sure the placement feels and is intentional.

Step 2: Label specific parts of the photo as providing each of the specific details of Text, Conscious Subtext, and Unconscious Subtext. For example, if someone isn't smiling in her photo, you can label her mouth or eyes as having the conscious subtext of "serious" or "tough." Each diagram should include every detail you listed for Text, Conscious Subtext, and Unconscious Subtext.

Step 3: The three modes of labeling should have ways of differentiating them. These ways can be color (black/red/blue) type weight (Helvetica bold, Helvetica light, Helvetica ultralight) type size (one designation can be half the size of the other) placement (right/left, top/bottom, left/top, etc) or another method of your choosing

USE ONLY ONE MODE OF LABELING PER PAGE.

Remember the idea of "belt and suspenders." There's no need to use multiple methods when one will do.

Schedule

Friday, September 28: Assignment given. Spend the weekend working on your diagrams.

Wednesday, October 3: Bring in your four labeled diagrams. We'll have an in-class critique of these diagrams.

Friday October 5: Part II of assignment, to be handed out on Oct 3.

Wednesday October 10: Final due.