

Our first recipient was a student in Dr. Jeffrey Murray's course Persuasion and is receiving the award in Communication in the Advertising & Public Relations Degree Program

Katherine Robert was a student in my Persuasion course this past fall, and her research project for the course was titled "Dove: Campaign for True Beauty." Her paper examined the "predominant image and standard of beauty promulgated in the mass media" and the serious health consequences for women of that image and standard. Specifically, Ms. Robert conducted a sustained interrogation of Dove's recent "Campaign for Real Beauty," arguing that while Dove has sought to break "the legacy of beauty product advertising which has promoted an unrealistic and often harmful ideal of perfection," the "Campaign for Real Beauty" nevertheless reinscribes an "ideology of beauty" that relies upon and continues to exploit women's insecurities about their physical appearance. Through her close reading of the texts that comprise this marketing campaign, Ms. Robert both catalogued the persuasive strategies mobilized in the campaign and revealed the inherent contradictions between the campaign's claimed objectives and its persuasive mechanisms. While the affect of advertising, and of the mass media generally, upon women and other social groups is not a new area of study, it is also one whose relevance and importance continues to demand close critical attention, if not a relentless diligence, and we should all be encouraged that young scholars like Ms. Robert are both willing and capable to maintain the vigil. Congratulations!