CHAPTER 12

Marked Bodies

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 12, Marked Bodies, offers a wide variety of viewpoints and a number of images on a topic that most of your students will have a strong opinion about: how we see our bodies. This chapter attempts to assess the range of influences that inform an individual’s decision about what to do with his or her body. Specifically, this chapter engages with media influences on the body in times of rapid change. In a traditional social model, image generation was largely a top-down process of agenda-setting. A handful of companies were able to dictate the “ideal” body or, at least, reinforce a limited range of what counted as normal. Yet, in an era of media saturation through Web 2.0, Flickr, and YouTube cultures, individual access to these networks is changing. More and more multimedia composers are able to suggest new and challenging ways of viewing the body. Along these lines, the “gaze” has increasingly included a range of marked bodies.

The first section of the chapter, “Imagining the Ideal Body,” discusses how men and women see bodies under the influence of advertising and media culture. Its readings attempt to identify a range of factors including iconic images such as Barbie and G.I. Joe that continue to exercise an influence on how young Americans identify with gender roles. What students will find is that we often have a warped view of what is healthy and what is attractive. Rather than reflecting some eternal biological essence or “natural” fact of life, embodied identity, students will find, is largely constructed by social, cultural, and economic forces. The problem with social standards of health and attractiveness is that they are rarely met in reality.

The second section of the chapter, entitled “Fashion Statements,” presents selections that explore how people mark their bodies both temporarily and permanently. Where the first section explores the legacy of this agenda-setting by corporate America, the second section attempts to explore some of the points of resistance at an individual level. Take, for instance, Josie Appleton’s essay on tattoos that suggests a certain ambivalence in the act of marking the body. She, like many of the contributors in this section, seeks to render the body as a complex site of identity negotiation, struggle, and affirmation. In this way, people use their bodies to present an argument to the world. In a certain sense, they use their bodies to impose their own style on the dominant culture.
HOW TO USE THIS CHAPTER IN THE WRITING CLASSROOM

One way to approach using this chapter in your class is to treat the readings as offering multiple perspectives about our experience in the world: exploring with your students how we both view ourselves in a certain way, and how we try to alter our image in society. The first section examines body ideals, including hair color, weight, and gender norms, as well as clothing. As you teach each of the readings, ask students to bring in examples from their own lives and communities in order to connect the material here to their own concerns. This chapter is great for active learning and student writing in which students analyze social norms that determine body image. The selections allow students to improve their rhetorical flexibility through the creation of a variety of documents such as position papers, letters to editors, and full research projects on these topics. They can also learn a lot through visual arguments, constructing photo essays, storyboarding films, and rendering their own cartoons on these issues.

The second section builds on the first by addressing how people adorn their bodies by changing outward appearances through tattoos, clothing, and the growing phenomenon of religious T-shirts. You can use any combination of these readings to generate a class discussion on how we all feel the need to forge an identity by attaching a variety of visual signifiers to our bodies. These signifiers can range from a haircut and make-up to body piercings, henna, and our choice of clothing each day. You can talk with your students about the battle between style and substance, or what bodies we are born with and how we seek to change those bodies in relationship to the identities that many social forces seek to confer on us. The body, as these readings attest, is rhetorical and constructed. This section lends itself well to student presentations on how people mark their bodies, on what trends are popular (Japanese or Chinese characters as tattoos, for example), and on what arguments people seem to be making with their choice of clothing. It might at first be tricky to get students to scrutinize what to them might seem a “natural” process (putting on a shirt, for instance) but by using the readings as a springboard, you can get them to think rhetorically about the world we live in, including, most importantly, our own bodies.

Visit www.pearsonhighered.com/envision ★ Student Resources ★ Chapter 12: Marked Bodies ★ Resources and Readings; as well as the Student Writing module.

WRITING RESOURCES FROM PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

For guidelines on position papers, see Chapter 3; for instructions on developing a research topic out of the very broad theme of body image, have students work through the activities and At a Glance boxes in Chapter 4, “Planning and Proposing Research Arguments.” There are in fact propaganda posters in Chapter 4 that focus on gender norms and clothing and body issues, so you might return to that chapter for a lesson on rhetorical analysis of such texts. If students plan to create visual arguments, photo essays or films, they can find help for such compositions in Chapter 8, while Chapter 9 offers thorough guidance on developing and delivering presentations, and students can use that material to share with the class their arguments on the issues in this section of the reader.
CHAPTER OPENER CLASS ACTIVITY USING FIGURE 12.1

The title, “Marked Bodies” might seem strange to students at first, but you can begin to unpack or explain this concept by working with the image in Figure 12.1. Lead your class through the following questions: In what ways is she “marked”—by tattoos, by piercings, by make-up, but also by skin color, race, gender, age? In what ways has she “marked herself” or aligned herself with a particular social group? What visual argument is she making about her identity in society? Now, take a step back and look at how the photographer has captured her. How does she mark herself through her gaze, direct, outward looking, almost smiling? How do bodies function as texts to be read and analyzed for their arguments about individual identity and about society? Along these lines, even the comparatively unmarked body can serve a rhetorical purpose of reinforcing certain social attitudes. Now that you have opened up the concept of “marked bodies,” proceed on to the readings that follow.

Resources on the Readings, IMAGINING THE IDEAL BODY

SECTION OPENER CLASS ACTIVITY USING FIGURES 12.2–12.4

The three images at the beginning of this section offer students a perspective on how social norms about body ideals are formed. Have students look at the first image, Figure 12.2, and make a list of all the ways it both resembles and differs from standard fashion magazine beauty images. They might even bring in fashion images to use as a contrast. Then, discuss with them what we take for granted regarding norms in images and what arguments about social values are implied by the specific visual elements they have included in their lists. Note that one current fashion trend is to portray models with heavy make-up in order to invoke situations of physical abuse including suggestive background environments such as alleyways and other places of danger. Discuss with your class what this trend might mean. How are such photos a spoof or not a spoof? What is at stake in seeing such images as representations of “ideal beauty”?

Next, examine the images in Figures 12.3–12.4. How does this pairing create a cause-and-effect argument? (Return to Chapter 2, page 28 for a discussion of this strategy of argumentation). Note how the “ideal beauty” in the Chinese billboard of a white face and red hair shapes the kind of beauty sought after by the Chinese women in the street scene from Figure 12.4. For an assignment, ask your students to take photographs of ads and billboards in their communities—or to recount ones they have seen in their travels or in magazines—and analyze the cause-and-effect power of those visual arguments on notions of beauty. What are the implied consequences of these images?

Susie Orbach, “Fat Is an Advertising Issue”

The author of the provocative 1978 book *Fat Is a Feminist Issue*, Orbach got her chance to walk into the lion’s den of corporate America and help craft an advertising campaign that fits with her ideas on the issue of women’s bodies. In this article, Orbach discusses her involvement in Dove’s campaign, and she integrates a lot of research she has conducted on...
body issues facing women and girls. Orbach published this persuasive essay in *Campaign* magazine, and she includes a strong message about how images influence women by suggesting that each image of a “real” woman in the media can offset an image of Kate Moss or Nicole Ritchie.

**TEACHING THE TEXT AS WRITING**

Ask students to characterize the writing style. Notice the accessible tone, the frequent use of questions to engage the reader, the integration of a friendly “I.” Discuss the effect of this on the construction of the writer’s persona and ethos. What, then is the effect on the reader? Use this essay as a model for a persuasive personal narrative based on field research.

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION:**

- Have students research online and locate the images for the Unilever and Ogilvie & Mather Dove “Campaign for Real Beauty.” Based on these images, do students agree with Orbach that its campaign is a step in the right direction? How so and how not?

- What additional criteria influence people’s judgments of bodies? How does the shape of people’s bodies relate to their health? Is the public obsession with weight loss and thinness a public health issue? Does Orbach address this issue? If not, why not? Where in the article could Orbach have brought this up? What do students think she would say about it?

- Orbach says that women are complicit in “unrealistic representations of femaleness.” Do the women in the class feel they are complicit? Do the men feel they are complicit? In what ways are women and men in society victims and how might they also contribute to the problem Orbach describes?

**SUGGESTED WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:**

- Assign a research project in which each student examines the advertising around another of Unilever’s other health and beauty products, among them Lever 2000 soap, Salon Selectives, Vaseline, Degree antiperspirant, Axe body spray, and so on. Have students write a rhetorical analysis of the ads, returning to Chapter 2 for detailed instructions on how to work with ads. Then, each student can make a presentation to the class offering an argument about what Orbach’s response to the ad would be.

- Orbach describes a failed attempt on the part of the British government to hold a Body Image Summit in 1999. Ask students to plan their own Body Image Summit. Who would they invite to speak? What seminars or forums would they arrange? Students should follow the instructions in Chapter 8 on multimedia arguments to design a brochure and Website for their summit. Students might also invite faculty...
from campus as guest speakers, then write introductions for each of them and actually hold the summit.

• Have students write a rhetorical analysis research paper presenting their own argument about how media images affect their ideas about the female or male figure. Students can include personal accounts of their own struggles with body image, if appropriate, as long as they integrate that narrative as evidence and also use research.

• Rebecca Traister has written in Salon.com that “The one little wrinkle—so to speak—in this you-go-girl stick-it-to-the-media-man empowerment campaign is that the set of Dove products that these real women are shilling for is cellulite firming cream.” Have students write an essay in which they analyze Traister’s argument to identify her criticisms of the campaign, following the guidelines on Strategies of Arrangement from Chapter 3. Then, ask students to compose rebuttal papers in order to defend the campaign against each of those criticisms. Visit this link at Salon.com: http://dir.salon.com/story/mwt/feature/2005/07/22/dove/index.html.

Many students could be directed to propaganda posters from World War II such as Rosie the Riveter for rhetorical analysis writing assignments. Ask students to explore the resources on the Envision Website for older political posters. What relevance do they still have for the present day? Visit Envision Website by following this path: www.pearsonhighered.com/envision Student Resources Chapter 4: Planning and Proposing Research Arguments Resources and Readings Propaganda Archives and Poster Collections.

John Riviello, “What if Barbie Was an Actual Person?” A Flash Movie

In this short digital animation, John Riviello alters supermodel Leticia Casta’s body digitally to show how absurdly proportioned Barbie is. He uses humor and visual persuasion to make his argument about the misleading representation of the ideal body in dolls such as Barbie.

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION:**

• How does Riviello use visual persuasion to make an argument that Barbie is one of the causes of poor body image in girls and women? Have students discuss the effect of dolls such as Barbie on social norms.

• Analyze the clothing on the body of the models in the drawing. How does the clothing represent identity and prescribe certain standards of beauty? Would this clothing be acceptable in all cultures? How so or how not?

• Have students follow the link to the complete flash movie, accessible through the Envision Website: http://www.pearsonhighered.com/envision/390. Do they think that the two selected images are effective representations of Riviello’s complete argument? Which two still shots might they choose and why?
Ask students to work through the other features and interactive learning modules on Riviello’s Website, available through http://www.pearsonhighered.com/envision/390. Which activities are the most persuasive? How might they think about body image for both girls and boys differently after working through the various elements of the Website?

**SUGGESTED WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:**

- Ask students to construct an interview between a Barbie who is unhappy with her unrealistic body image and her creators. Have her use various strategies of argumentation from Chapter 2 and demand a change.

- Students might investigate start-up companies that have developed what they consider to be more “positive body image” role models for girls, such as Fulla, the Muslim version of a Barbie doll. Ask students to conduct research on the many articles written about the popularity of Fulla and then compose a comparative rhetorical analysis on the differences between Barbie and Fulla. Students can consult Chapter 5 on finding sources for this assignment. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fulla_(doll).

- Students now grow up with many different kinds of dolls. Have students create a photo essay of dolls created for girls and/or boys and then write an analysis of how body image has changed.

**National Eating Disorders Association, 2004 Get Real Campaign Ad**

The Get Real campaign is part of a wider trend in public service advertising that aims to persuade viewers and consumers to think critically about their choices and actions. The text uses powerful visual imagery, shockingly incongruous elements, and an appeal to its target audience of American youth.

**TEACHING THE TEXT AS WRITING**

The text makes its argument through both visual and verbal strategies. Ask students to look at the strategic placement of the words, “I’m so fat,” in script and bubble, against the informational words of the ad. If you are in a computer classroom, access the ad online at http://www.dietsinreview.com/diet_column/02/wordless-wednesday-get-real-about-eating-disorders/ and look closely at the visual design elements of the text. Ask students to work through the prewriting checklist on ads in Chapter 2 (pp. 42–43) and to apply the lessons from Chapter 8 on op-ads in their analysis of this text.

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION:**

- What is the purpose in the arrangement of visual elements in this ad? How is the viewer persuaded to identify with the girl based on the position of the model? Is this
an effective strategy of arrangement for the op-ad? What other visual and verbal elements are most persuasive?

- How does the op-ad make best use of Adbuster’s description for how people encounter texts, as explained on pages 175 (see Figure 8.3, a graphic representation of what readers notice most on a page)

**SUGGESTED WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:**

- If you are in a computer classroom, access more recent campaign posters on the Website for the National Eating Disorders Association at http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/nedastore/shop.html. Place students into groups and ask each group to conduct a comparative rhetorical analysis of a more recent poster, analyzing both visual design elements and the words on the poster.

- What might an op-ad on eating disorders for boys look like? Sketch a design for a new campaign.

- The National Eating Disorder Information Centre (NEDIC) is a Canadian clearinghouse for information about anorexia nervosa and bulimia. Visit http://www.nedic.ca/. Conduct a comparative analysis of this Website with the Get Real campaign.

- Ask students to look online for similar ads. They can find Amnesty International ads and a similar campaign by the Red Cross at http://www.amnesty.org/en/campaigns/stop-violence-against-women and http://www.redcross.org/preparedness/readalert/. Then have students design their own ad campaign to combat eating disorders. You might ask them to create a couple of posters or to storyboard a television commercial.

**WORKING WITH THE COLLABORATIVE CHALLENGE ON PAGE 392**

The purpose of the collaborative challenge is to get students to think critically about body image, not as a female issue, but as a human issue. Depending on your school demographics, you could expand this activity to consider representations of identity along the lines of sexuality, age, class, and race. The point here is to use writing and visual production to come to a new awareness of the force of the media in shaping what we think and the power of writing to offer an alternative image. In rhetorical terms, what we believe to be true is called *doxa* (what we deeply believe), and what we receive as a fresh concept is called *nomos* (or new social norms).

**Susan McClelland, “Distorted Images: Western Cultures are Exporting Their Dangerous Obsession with Thinness”**

Susan McClelland examines the effect that images from the West are having on other cultures, including communities in Africa and in the South Pacific. She suggests that all
around the world the idea of beauty is being homogenized, and that the ideal is, in the words of one Canadian psychologist, thin and white.

TEACHING THE TEXT AS WRITING
McClelland uses a range of rhetorical techniques, including the reliance on a pathos-centered narrative that begins the piece. She also includes a short history of body types and a shocking anecdote about how in three years, attitudes changed among young Fiji girls, leading to an entire cohort of insecure young women. In teaching this text, ask students to identify how she integrates sources effectively and concludes with an echo of her opening by using a narrative example.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION:
• McClelland targets the spread of Western media and uses powerful evidence to support her argument. Which examples are most shocking, most convincing? How does McClelland introduce each of her sources effectively? Students might compare the writing strategies here to the lesson on integrating sources effectively from Chapter 6 (pp. 124–128).

• McClelland paraphrases Joan Jacobs Brumberg’s book on anorexia nervosa to suggest that social attitudes towards large women changed in the Industrial Revolution as people started to distance themselves from their lower-class pasts. Why, according to the article, were lower-class people heavier, or perceived to be? What has changed today? Have students point to examples in the current media.

• In the short section on Fiji, McClelland connects class to the idea of thinness when she quotes Anne Becker on the young women: “They said things such as, ‘I watched the women on TV, they have jobs. I want to be like them, so I am working on my weight now.’” How does economics enter the picture in today’s global media marketplace? How are economics and body image and cultural norms connected today?

SUGGESTED WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:
• Ask students to pretend they are executives at a fashion house that employs rail-thin fashion models or that they are television studio heads responsible for putting thin, white women on the screen. They should write a defense of their businesses in response to McClelland’s arguments. Then, have students write a counter-argument based on one executive who wants to make changes in the industry.

• Ask students to rewrite the essay by turning it into a dialogue of sources, following the guidelines in Chapter 5 (p. 108). Include the voices of Dhanani, Cheryl, and Linda as well as the quotes from authorities on this topic. How does the dialogue of sources reveal the richness of McClelland’s dialogue of sources?
For a variation on the writing prompt from page 394, have students look at a collection of women’s and men’s magazines such as *Men’s Health, Maxim, GQ, Cosmopolitan, Elle, Seventeen.* This can be an in-class activity. Students should write an analysis of the arguments in the advertisements, following the guidelines in Chapter 2.

**WORKING WITH THE VISUAL READING ON PAGE 394, FIGURE 12.8: “CHARLES ATLAS”**

The Charles Atlas comic ad on page 394 works as a transition in the chapter as we move from a focus on girls and women to a focus on boys and men. You might ask students to apply the prewriting checklist about comics and cartoons from Chapter 1 (p. 25) to this comic strip in order to analyze its argument and composition strategies. Also helpful would be the discussion from Chapter 2 on strategies of argumentation (p. 28). For in-class activities in a writing classroom, have students work through the “Reflect & Write” prompts on page 395 and explore the Atlas archive through the Envision Website at [http://www.pearsonhighered.com/envision/395](http://www.pearsonhighered.com/envision/395). Then, they might locate more contemporary visual arguments persuading men and boys to develop certain body types—ads in sports magazines are good examples. Divide the class into groups and have each one create and then present a photo essay on the arguments of contemporary ads or comics about male body image.


The authors measured how male action figures, such toys as G.I. Joe and the Luke Skywalker and Han Solo characters from Star Wars, grew to inhuman proportions over three decades. They found that when they applied the action figure’s proportions to a six-foot human male, the bicep of a G.I. Joe, for example, grew from 12.2 inches to 26.8 inches—a measurement impossible to attain for even the largest bodybuilder’s bicep. The authors are cautious about making conclusions about whether the growth of action figures has led to eating disorders in young men, but they warn that their findings should not be discounted, and they link their work to studies of cultural ideals of thinness in women.

**TEACHING THE TEXT AS WRITING**

This selection by Pope and his colleagues at Harvard Medical School is a scholarly paper that was published in a peer-reviewed journal, so it follows a structure common to the genre of scientific reports. Discuss with students how the subheads adhere to strict standards in the sciences for organizing information, and have them compare the writing of this paper to articles they locate for their research papers (as well as to the stylistic expectations of the course). The abstract is a good model for students to follow in composing their own abstracts for research papers. Refer students back to Chapter 8 (pp. 172–173) for instructions on how to write an abstract for an academic audience.
ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION:

- How effectively does the abstract that precedes the paper itself express the ideas contained within? What key information did the authors include in the abstract? What is excluded?

- Historically, the concept of action heroes has been prevalent from Hercules and Ajax in ancient Greek mythology to Samson in Biblical Hebrew traditions to George Washington in early America. What are the cultural ideals of body image offered by these earlier action heroes?

- How do the authors expand the significance of their argument at the end to include broader topics on body image such as nutrition, the influence of media images in comic strips and motion pictures, and cultural ideals of thinness in women? What is the effect of this micro-to-macro strategy of argumentation? What larger argument are the authors able to persuade readers to consider?

SUGGESTED WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

- Have students look up several of the scientific studies Pope and the other authors cite in their references and summarize the articles in their research logs. In this way, they can follow the technique described in Chapter 5 to use one source to locate another (p. 100). Students should comment on how they might use these new sources in a research paper and how their knowledge expanded as a result of the additional research in scholarly articles.

- The authors assert in closing that, “It is our impression that comic strip characters, male models in magazines, and male motion picture actors have all shown a parallel trend toward increasing leanness and muscularity over the last several decades. However, more systematic studies will be required to confirm these observations.” In groups or individually, have students brainstorm and design other systematic studies that could help confirm their observations about the parallel trends in diverse media.

- Write a letter to Pope and his colleagues at Harvard Medical School from the position of a scholarly journal editor who wants to thank the authors for researching this important social topic.

- For a course entailing extensive research, you could ask students to divide up the sources listed in the References section (presented in APA format) and write annotations for each source. Follow the guidelines on writing an annotated bibliography; see Chapter 5, p. 110.
WORKING WITH THE COLLABORATIVE CHALLENGE ON PAGE 402

The collaborative challenge offers students an opportunity to put into practice what they have gleaned from Pope’s complex scholarly argument through hands-on learning. You might set up a field trip for the class to a toy store. You might divide students into groups and have each group analyze the dolls targeted at a particular audience: girls or boys, specific age ranges, etc. If students do not have access to a toy store, and you are teaching in a computer classroom, you can arrange students into groups and have them explore store’s inventories online. One group might look at international dolls for diverse cultural models of body image. Have students work through a rhetorical analysis of the characteristics of the dolls that help shape social norms about body image and then write an analysis paper or blog entry before presenting their work as a group to the class.

Kim Franke-Folstad, “G.I. Joe’s Big Biceps Are Not a Big Deal”

Franke-Folstad’s essay was written as a direct response to Pope’s academic study of the growing muscles of action figures, especially G.I. Joe. She makes one central point: kids grow out of dolls, and focusing on them is misguided. She does not doubt that kids can be influenced by cultural icons: she cites Charles Atlas, Bill Romanowski, pro wrestlers, and Mark McGuire as people who have led young men to want to bulk up. But she denied vehemently that “plastic dolls” can have the same effect.

TEACHING THE TEXT AS WRITING

This is a classic newspaper column with the cadences and informal speech commonly found in that kind of writing. One-sentence paragraphs abound as does punchy language. Consequently, the author communicates her message in a much more colloquial way than Pope and his colleagues do in the previous selection. Have students compare the writing style and discuss the importance of audience.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION:

• How does Franke-Folstad’s tone help or hurt her argument? Analyze the first five paragraphs, sentence by sentence. How does she use certain vocabulary to set the stage for her essay? What about contrast? How does she use short sentences combined with longer sentence? How does she use informal phrasing next to formal phrasing?

• Can a newspaper column assault a scientific paper with such flippancy and be effective? Franke-Folstad dismisses Pope’s entire paper with the sentence, “To suggest that even little boys measure manliness by taking a ruler to their G.I. Joes is comical.” Does this line work as a rebuttal? Do you think that scientific studies have more authority than other genres of writing such as newspaper columns? What is the relationship between scientific discourse and the public accommodation of the sciences?
• Franke-Folstad’s argument mentions Charles Atlas. Return to the visual reading of the Atlas comic on page 394. How might Pope’s point actually be validated in the Atlas comic?

**SUGGESTED WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:**

• Franke-Folstad writes that “For years, I’ve been defending Barbie against accusations that she promotes an unrealistic body image for little girls,” but she doesn’t say what her arguments have been. Ask students to research Franke-Folstad’s earlier writings on the subject and conduct a comparative analysis of her arguments over the years. They should write up their findings in a synthesis paper.

• Ask students to write a letter to the editor in which they respond to Franke-Folstad’s piece by presenting a rhetorical analysis of the Charles Atlas comic from page 394.

• Discuss with students the significance of Pope’s selection for this interview. How does this show his prominence as an authority in the field? Have students review Chapter 5 on finding sources for a research project.

**DISCUSSING AND WRITING ABOUT THE SECTION AS A WHOLE:**

• Ask students to visit John Riviello’s Website on body image and study his page on male body image (see http://www.pearsonhighered.com/envision/390) and dolls, focusing on GI Joe Extreme. Write a blog entry comparing the persuasiveness of Riviello’s online writing to the persuasiveness of Pope’s writing for diverse audiences.

• Ask students to place three or four of the authors or contributors to this section in a dialogue of sources on body image and include themselves as the moderator. They should follow the guidelines on pages 108–110, and develop their own research-based position through the writing of the dialogue.

• Have students develop a research-based essay that uses as its sources at least three of the selections in this chapter section. Chapter 6 offers guidelines on developing an outline, integrating sources effectively, and composing a draft. Students might also want to review page 121, “Spotlight on Your Argument” in order to decide the best voice for their research paper.

• Watch a YouTube video by Eggman913 that shows women’s faces from 500 years of Western art morphing into each other; visit http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nUDIoN__Hxs. Analyze the short film as a class and discuss what has changed and what has remained the same in ideals of beauty over time. What representations are missing? What argument does the image montage make about social ideals of body image and beauty?
Resources on the Readings, FASHION STATEMENTS

SECTION OPENER CLASS ACTIVITY USING FIGURE 12.9

The opening of this section of the textbook explains to students how fashion statements—external adornments from tattoos to headscarves, jewelry to clothing—can be considered arguments about identity. Another way to convey this concept to your student is this: The external visual markers we wear present arguments about who we are or want to be, where we live, which communities we belong to, or what values we hold. With this set of concerns in mind, have students analyze the images in Figures 12.9 and 12.10 for their similarities and differences. Both photos have to do with a rhetorical situation involving clothing and fashion, but what identities are suggested by each woman’s strategic choice of visual markers? After holding a class discussion on this topic, you might ask students to take digital photos of the ways that people use fashion as arguments. Students can either take photos around the school or they can explore images through Flickr or Google. Hold class presentations for students to share their arguments about the images.

Pamela Abbott and Francesca Sapsford, “Clothing the Young Female Body”

Abbott and Sapsford’s research examines the prevailing social attitudes about media representations of fashion and the female body. They join many scholars who seek to challenge the ability of the fashion industry to define beauty and mold the female body by defining femininity solely in terms of sexual attraction. These industries, Abbott and Sapsford note, perpetuate the “beauty myth” wherein young women feel pressured by the media to constantly be perceived as desirable visual objects for others. Simply stated, such images deny young girls the ability to have any imagination to think beyond the identities that are produced for them. Clothing, in Abbott and Sapsford’s view, is seen as a complex blend of factors that can even become points of individual resistance and positive deviation. They suggest that clothing can become a creative negotiation of identity that obtains even under the most objectifying of standards. They close by asking teachers and young women (and increasingly young men affected by these pressures) to learn to become consumers.

TEACHING THE TEXT AS WRITING

This essay is an excellent example of how experienced research writers are able to effectively substantiate their arguments with scholarly citations. Have students locate the main arguments in the text and then identify the evidence that each scholarly reference provides. Have students note patterns in Abbott and Sapsford’s explicit language. Finally, have students map the progression of the general argument to see how the authors moves from one claim to the next, always guiding their use of sources back to the main thesis.
ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION:

- Abbott and Sapsford mention media as an influence but not in much specificity. How have Abbott and Sapsford’s arguments changed in an Internet and social media era?

- The authors mention resistance at an individual level. Ask students for examples of resistance they have personally witnessed. Ask if female consumers have shown collective signs of resistance? Have we seen any advertising campaigns that acknowledge these tensions?

- Does Naomi Wolf’s beauty myth have any increasing significance for male consumers in an era where “metrosexuality” has gained social currency?

SUGGESTED WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

- Have students identify the ideal body type that contributes to the “beauty myth” and design a counter-narrative employing the same body type by inserting new captions, text overlays, or by juxtaposing it with a different image (a re-mix collage). Have students explore how existing images can be repurposed for persuasive meanings. Look back to Chapter 11 on remixing culture for examples (pp. 349–350 and 378–379).

- Another productive assignment could ask students to take a typical signifier of beauty in Western culture and compare it to other cultures. Have students write an exploratory essay in which they consider the question: Do non-western cultures have the same relationship to the body that Westerners do? Develop a thesis statement to support this cross-cultural essay.

- As Abbot and Sapsford leave room for individual negotiation against the fashion industry, many students may be left with the answer, “Yes, it’s a problem, but what can we do about it? We can’t get rid of clothing!” Have students write a position paper about the merits of social attempts to control clothing such as school uniform programs or the National Basketball Association’s dress codes for athletes. From the standpoint of visual rhetoric, what do such codes reflect about the priorities of the organizations weighed against the individual’s right to self-expression. Look back at Chapter 3 for instructions on writing a position paper (pp. 59 and 71).

WORKING WITH THE VISUAL READING ON PAGE 410, FIGURE 12.11: GOK, “DRESS FOR SUCCESS”

These three images ask students to consider how clothing can reflect one’s personality. The Fabulous magazine spread represents categories for cosmopolitan fashion that might be seen as typical for a particular generation, class, race, and culture. Have students discuss which elements correspond to their own sense of fashion and identity, and which do not. From there, move on to discuss how identity is partially constructed by external appearances. Ask
the students to complete their own “dress-for-success” visual argument as directed in the “Write” prompt, and even consider making one of your own from when you were their age. Discuss how seemingly fixed notions shift with time, culture, place, and community values, or *doxa*.


Read the headnote with the brief biography of artist Rob Dobi. How do students understand his *ethos* after recognizing his many accomplishments? What do they think Figures 12.12 and 12.13 are meant to say as cultural arguments, in terms of a status that one might aspire to? Explore the relationship between clothing and cultural *ethos*: Are certain looks essential for the business profession? Consider the shift from suits to casual clothes in many technology companies, such as Google or Facebook. Additionally, discuss the gender differences between Emo for Girls and Emo for Boys. Look at body stance, posture, and expression as well as the attributes of clothing and preferences. Finally, discuss how trends in youth attire have changed from the nineteenth century to today. You might ask students to watch old films of college life and then construct a visual timeline, showing trends in clothing, attitudes, likes and names. Follow the creative categories listed in Figure 12.12: playlist, hearts, hates, dirty secrets, AOL screenname, bookmarks. How are these categories indicative of today’s digital culture? What would similar categories be for college students in the 1890s? In the 1920s? In the 1960s? In the 1980s?

**Ruth La Ferla, “Wearing Their Beliefs on Their Chests”**

Ruth La Ferla’s article about the rise of religious messages and iconography in the world of fashion is wide-ranging, as it encompasses everything from T-shirts to high fashion. She covers many reasons for wearing religion—from devout faith to bitter irony. As La Ferla shows, putting religious messages on clothing might have been instigated by religious people, but retailers are happy when people buy the clothing for any reason, including fashion.

**TEACHING THE TEXT AS WRITING**

In this journalism piece, La Ferla focuses on the business side of wearing religious markers on one’s body. Her piece moves from a narrative approach in the beginning to more of an analysis of the business near the end. This *New York Times* article might serve as an excellent model for how to write an engaging essay that combines narrative, field research, financial data, and an argument about social values. Have students notice how crisp and specific her references are to concrete examples she has observed. These specific examples make her writing more vivid and persuasive.

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION:**

- La Ferla quotes the president of a trend-forecasting company as saying that religion is becoming the new brand. What does this mean? What are brands, and why do
people wear them? Can religion be considered a brand? How so? What other entities have become brands? Is the United States a brand? How so? How do such brands change over time?

• La Ferla raises the idea that some might wear religious T-shirts or other articles of clothing in an ironic way. What does she mean by this? How does irony work in this instance?

• Is it true that people feel more comfortable airing their religious views in public today compared to twenty years ago? Why do you think that is the case? What has changed in American society to allow this openness? Conversely, why do you think people in the U.S. couldn’t express their religious views before? Is religious freedom true for all groups within America?

**SUGGESTED WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:**

• La Ferla’s piece includes a compelling photo montage of images, showing people wearing various religious adornments. Although the photo is small, have students look closely at the image. Assign each student to write a rhetorical analysis of one particular image, and ask the students to incorporate points made in the article in their argument about the image. Then have all the students present their work to the class.

• La Ferla claims that religious clothing has become a big business. Ask students to write a letter to the editor offering a position paper on this phenomenon.

• Have students write about new trends in what people are wearing—religious jewelry, clothing with sayings on them, and other fashion statements. Ask students to create a photo essay using images they take on campus and then post it as a blog entry.

**WORKING WITH THE COLLABORATIVE CHALLENGE ON PAGE 415**

The activity described on page 415 offers students a chance to research the debate over headscarves as both a religious adornment and a powerful political symbol. You might decide to have students work through this collaborative challenge before analyzing the reading by Marjane Satrapi on page 419. Several students might want to use the preliminary research sources here as a springboard for a more in-depth research project on legal rights and religious freedom or on the rhetoric of religion.

**WORKING WITH THE VISUAL READING ON PAGE 416, FIGURE 12.14: “MARY IS MY HOMEGIRL”**

The inclusion of the “Mary is My Homegirl” T-shirt allows students to examine La Ferla’s point in a case study example. How does this shirt paradoxically mark the woman as potentially irreverent or non-religious? Have students work through the “Reflect & Write”
questions and then locate additional examples of wearing religion. They might search Flickr or Facebook, or they could bring in their own photographs. Then, discuss: How do we interpret visual rhetoric as a straight-forward statement or as a parody?


Paul Mitchell discusses an episode from his past when, going to a concert, he searched for the how he could demonstrate his faith in Jesus on his his T-shirt. Then he laments the mockery of his faith through “spoof” T-shirts. But Mitchell understands why T-shirts spoof Christianity: It’s because he feels that religion has fallen into sloganeering, and so it has become an easy target for parody. He concludes that if religion aimed at a subtler message, it might not be so vulnerable, and he importantly brings up the question of whether or not religion has become a brand.

**TEACHING THE TEXT AS WRITING**

This article was written for a specific audience—young Christians—and was published in an online Christian journal. Discuss with students what aspects of the writing might appeal to this audience. How does Mitchell tailor his word choice, persona, use of examples, strategy of arrangement, and message to his particular audience?

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION:**

- Why does Mitchell emphasize that nobody at the concert says anything to him about his T-shirt? What was he expecting to happen? Was he going for controversy? Was he trying to get a reaction? Why do you think that Mitchell does not explain further? He goes directly into a discussion of history. What is the effect of this transition on the reader?

- Mitchell longs for greater subtlety in public displays of faith, and he says that the model should be the parables of Jesus. How did parables work as arguments? Is it possible, in advertising or on a T-shirt, to create parables?

- How have T-shirts become “mobile billboards,” as Mitchell calls them? What other messages do people try to get across on their T-shirts? What do you make of T-shirts that show a logo, like Nike or Tommy Hilfiger? In what ways are the wearers trying to mark their bodies?

**SUGGESTED WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:**

- Mitchell argues that “Christianity is not a brand,” a message Ruth La Ferla’s essay contradicts. Write a dialogue of sources between the two writers in which they discuss this issue. Be sure to add your own voice as moderator and advance your own argument.
• This essay was written for a Christian audience. Try to make the same point as Mitchell, but rewrite his essay for a newspaper such as The New York Times. What would you need to change in order to address a new audience?

• Compose a personal narrative about your own experiences, from a time when you selected clothing to mark your body and express your identity but the attempt was not successful. Try to make a larger argument about social values and marked bodies towards the end of your essay, turning it from exposition to argumentation.

Marjane Satrapi, “The Veil” from Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood

Satrapi’s work has been critically acclaimed and compared to that of Art Spiegelman, who wrote Maus, a famous graphic novel series about the Holocaust in which Jews are represented as mice and Nazis as cats. Satrapi’s book Persepolis is based on her own life experiences, and it presents a view into changing conditions in Iran several decades ago. The book is an excellent example of a graphic novel, and it was made into a movie that premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in 2007.

TEACHING THE TEXT AS WRITING

The excerpt here shows students the genre of the graphic novel, a form of writing that resembles a comic book but is aimed more at adults than at children. The images and words work together to tell a story and offer an argument. You might have students compare the graphic novel to the storyboard in Chapter 6. You can also apply the lessons from Chapter 1 on analyzing cartoons and comic strips to help with a class analysis of the graphic novel excerpt published here.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION:

• What might Satrapi mean by the assertion that “images are a way of writing”? Explain this with regard to the excerpt here.

• How does invention and arrangement work to structure the argument of this page from the graphic novel?

• What religious experiences could the students in your class write about or develop a graphic novel about? What would be the argument?

SUGGESTED WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

• Ask students to read all of Persepolis (or watch the film) and then write an essay explaining the book’s argument about how clothing plays a part in the life of the child growing up during the Iranian Revolution. Have several students read the sequel and deliver a presentation about the argument of the second book.
• Have students read an interview with Satrapi available online at http://www.books-lut.com/features/2004_10_003261.php. Conduct an analysis of the writer's comments on her own writing. Then, compose additional interview questions based on issues raised in Satrapi's work.

• How can a graphic novel or comic book express serious topics? Does it prevent the reader from taking any message seriously? Why or why not? Have students write position papers and cite evidence from a text other than *Persepolis*.

**WORKING WITH THE VISUAL READINGS ON PAGES 419–420, FIGURES 12.15–12.16**

The graphic novel excerpt from *Persepolis*, by Marjane Satrapi (Figure 12.15) and the photograph by Shirin Neshat (Figure 12.16) both offer visual representations of Muslim women or girls wearing the veil. These images stand as a transition from the section's focus on tattoos to the section's attention to clothing and jewelry as markers of religious identity. If students in your class are not familiar with the religious reasons for wearing of the veil, it may be worth discussing cultural norms and multiple perspectives on this issue. Many Islamic women view the veil as freedom from the oppression of having men look at them.

Shirin Neshat, ““Women of Allah, Rebellious Silence”

Shirin Neshat is a well-known Iranian artist whose work in photography and video is provocative and strikingly beautiful. This particular image is part of a series called “Women of Allah.” The photo was taken by Cynthia Preston. Other images in the “Women of Allah” series include a close up of feet holding a gun and a close-up of fingers on lips.

**TEACHING THE TEXT AS WRITING**

Have students analyze the image using the prewriting checklist for photos in Chapter 3 (pp. 69–70). Then, discuss this as an example of a hybrid text, combining words and images. Who is the audience? What are the writing and visual rhetoric conventions shaping the composition of the text?

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION:**

• What is the effect of the gun in the image? How does this one element dominate the other elements, such as the veil, the writing on the face, or the black and white composition?

• What is the effect of the subject’s gaze out at the viewer? Compare this woman to the woman in Figure 12.1 and discuss how each body is marked and has marked itself. Students might comment on features such as choice of attire, ink markings, metal objects, as well as lighting, context, gaze, expression, eye makeup, and suggested persona.
SUGGESTED WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

• Have students look at an article about and photos from Neshat’s collection, available at http://www.time.com/time/europe/photoessays/neshat/. Then, ask students to write a rhetorical analysis of her work. They should discuss in detail three of her pieces, following the guidelines in Chapter 3 for writing about photographs and in Chapter 8 (pp. 170–171) for incorporating visuals in writing.

• The title of the photograph published in the textbook is “Rebellious Silence.” What does the title add to students’ understanding of the image’s argument? Ask students to stage and compose their own photographs that reflect their understanding of “Rebellious Silence” for their own lives and situations. Hold a class exhibit of the work and ask students to present different interpretations of their texts.


Rainer’s photographs ask viewers to reflect upon the connotations of bodily markings in contemporary society. Figure 12.17 offers the photo of a man framed by the structures from the Burning Man Festival, held annually in Nevada as a counter-cultural gathering of people rebelling against the constraints of society. Discuss with students how the explanation beside the image explains only part of the image, namely, the subculture of “Modern Primitivism,” but does not give insight into the man’s life story or the events taking place at the festival that shaped this photo. Figure 12.18 blends what might be seen as “primitive” tribal tattoos with the modern architecture of the Golden Gate Bridge, thereby displaying competing narratives of collective and individual identity. Discuss with students how the explanatory text for Figure 12.18 builds the ethos of the three men in “The Tribe.” Figure 12.19 seems to be a candid photo; discuss with students how the explanatory text combines with the compositional elements of the photo to introduce another subculture of “marked bodies,” the Maori.

After analyzing and discussing these images, have students brainstorm a list of the bodily markings that they have encountered, either personally in their communities or in the media, including on shows such as MTV’s L.A. Ink. Can sympathetic media representations of alternative communities begin to challenge mainstream bias against those with much ink?

Josie Appleton, “The Body Piercing Project”

While Appleton’s bold opening claim that piercings and tattoos are no longer taboo may be students’ initial point of contention, her overall important point is that tattoos have shifted from homogenous markers of group affiliation to the realm of individual and personal expression. Further, Appleton productively defines this shift as the reaction to a potential identity crisis wherein the focus on the body becomes a result of a loss of group identification. Modern tattoos and piercings, in other words, mark ambivalence between creative expression and social alienation as the traditional progression of social identity has
changed. Pain and the ability to mark one’s own body, in Appleton’s opinion, become a lens through which to evaluate social and personal trauma.

**TEACHING THE TEXT AS WRITING**

Have students assess the effectiveness of the alternative organization of Appleton’s essay. She states what seems like a bold and provocative claim in the first sentence and yet her thesis doesn’t come until the end. Have students identify and plot the general progression of statements that, in effect, Appleton uses to move from this first claim to a general thesis.

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION:**

- Does Appleton’s claim that the taboo on skin ink has been lifted bear out across all segments of the cultural landscape? What about for media and television representations?
- What is the overall quality of Appleton’s evidence? What types of appeals and sources does she rely upon to state her case? She tends to rely upon anecdotes and generalizations. How could empirical or quantitative evidence help her claims?
- Appleton links the piercing and marking of the body as an individual’s attempt to seize control over the only things that he or she is able to in a tumultuous social environment. What other behaviors do human beings engage in to seize control when they are feeling lost?

**SUGGESTED WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:**

- Write an exploratory essay in which each student anonymously describes a tattoo or piercing that he or she has secretly always wanted to have and would feel comfortable displaying in a public setting. Collect and redistribute the answers and have each student list the type of personality and message that an individual marking would have.
- Have students write an essay that explore the “tribal” significance of Rainer’s photographs (Figures 12.17–12.19) in relationship both to Appleton’s essay and mainstream media representations of tattoos. How to tattoos nevertheless function as signifiers for villains, criminals, and poverty? Why do they never occur on children’s television shows? Why?
- If Rainer’s point is that tattoo’s express a personal, historical, and communal-spiritual side, and Appleton suggests that they stem from a loss of control, then can either’s perspective help explain why mainstream television and, especially, family programming seem so reluctant to embrace these signifiers?
DISCUSSING AND WRITING ABOUT THE SECTION AS A WHOLE:

• Visit the homepage for Busted Tees, one of many ironic T-shirt companies cropping up today, available at http://www.bustedtees.com/. Why do people wear “ironic” T-shirts? Employ quotes from at least two of the essays in “Fashion Statements” to support your argument.

• Find images of five fashion statements: tattoos, T-shirts, piercings, and so on, and create a presentation analyzing each of these statements. What argument are the people trying to make with their fashion statements? How are they trying to change their outer culture by their appearance? Research the tradition of wearing henna. How does this tradition fit into the discussion in “Fashion Statements” (p. 405)? How has this tradition been appropriated by people outside India? What arguments does wearing henna now make?