

Spring 2017
Sociology 131: Media, Marketing, and Culture
The Changing & Contested Image of Santa Cruz
Tuesday/Thursday 9:50-11:25am; Oakes 106
Prof. Miriam Greenberg



This course explores modern forms of media, marketing, and culture, and the ways in which they are shaped by and shaping of our society. This includes looking at media and cultural transformations of late capitalism; innovations in advertising and the rise of branding; the use of commercial culture to express identities; and the power of popular culture and cultural politics. We will read, screen, and discuss a wide variety of texts: from the historical and theoretical to the commercial, popular, and countercultural.

We will then apply this media and cultural studies lens to an analysis of **the multiple, changing, and contested images of Santa Cruz**, both city and county. We will look at how local images are produced, by whom, and to what end, as well as how and why these images resonate culturally and affectually. We will explore how these images change over time in response to different factors, including cultural and demographic shifts, the emergence of local culture industries, and the rise of Santa Cruz as one of the highest-priced—and least affordable—housing markets in the country. In relation to this, we will examine how the question “who is Santa Cruz” has become a site of contestation and political struggle. Are we a tourist town or hippie haven, a countercultural mecca or bedroom community for Silicon Valley, a semi-rural hamlet or rapidly urbanizing region, a sanctuary city for Latino immigrants or an elite enclave? Or all the above? And how has the answer to this question shaped decision-making about how the city will be developed, by whom, and for whom?

This course contributes to the **No Place Like Home** project, examining the roots and impacts of the local affordable housing crisis in Santa Cruz. See: noplacelikehomeucsc.org/. Students in the class will conduct original group research projects and audio documentaries. These projects will be compiled in an online hub and exhibited at public events for the project. It is recommended that students also take related course 139T: Community-Based Research Practicum, with Prof. Steve McKay, involving community-based survey research in the city of Watsonville and south Santa Cruz County.

Enrollment: Seats will be available for regular enrollment, however, some seats will be filled by permission code only. Please be sure to enroll if the class is still open, or wait list (during your 2nd enrollment appointment) if the class has filled and crash the course on the first day.

For more information, please email Prof. Greenberg at miriam@ucsc.edu.