



What Objects Mean, Second Edition: An Introduction to Material Culture

By Arthur Asa Berger

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Arthur Asa Berger, author of an array of texts in communication, popular culture, and social theory, is back with the second edition of his popular, user-friendly guide for students who want to understand the social meanings of objects. In this broadly interdisciplinary text, Berger takes the reader through half a dozen theoretical models that are commonly used to analyze objects. He then describes and analyzes eleven objects, many of them new to this edition?including smartphones, Facebook, hair dye, and the American flag?showing how they demonstrate concepts like globalization, identity, and nationalism. The book includes a series of exercises that allow students to analyse objects in their own environment. Brief and inexpensive, this introductory guide will be used in courses ranging from anthropology to art history, pop culture to psychology.

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Editorial Review

Review

Comments on the first edition:

"Berger's book takes a complex and nuanced topic—the study of material culture—and pares it down to a manageable first approach.... Overall, the book presents a basic survey of several important theories and scholars that students should become familiar with when beginning to study material culture, and demonstrates a useful structure for a course syllabus."

—Journal of Folklore Research

About the Author

Arthur Asa Berger is professor emeritus of Broadcast and Electronic Communication Arts at San Francisco State University, where he taught between 1965 and 2003. He has been a visiting professor in Italy, Germany, Hong Kong, and China and has lectured in more than a dozen countries. Berger is author of over one hundred articles and has authored or edited more than seventy five books on media, popular culture, social theory, humor, and tourism. His books have been translated into nine languages. Among his recent books are Seeing is Believing: An Introduction to Visual Communication; Understanding American Icons; Theorizing Tourism; Media and Communication Research Methods; Ads, Fads and Consumer Culture; and Shop 'Til You Drop. He was elected to the University of Iowa School of Journalism and Mass Communication's "Hall of Fame" in 2009.

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