module one

producing a visual communication audit
draft due in class on W 1/28
due by midnight on Sat 1/31

PURPOSE OF THIS MODULE

The purpose of this individual module is to allow you to:

1. conduct some initial research—ideally from places (e.g., offices, stores) and from spaces (web-published annual reports, media releases, newsletter articles, etc.);

2. gather and analyze examples of visuals used by particular organization or company; and

3. draw some conclusions about how those visuals are put to use by that particular organization or company.

OVERVIEW

For this module, you will produce a 2–3 page report, using the template provided on our class web site (in the “modules” area > module1_template.doc).

You will first identify an organization or company for which you want to perform a visual audit.

Then, for the audit, you will gather external communications that include visuals (graphs, photos, charts, etc.). although your analysis might focus on just one document, gather a good range of documents to get started (e.g., seven or eight).

> **External communications** refers to documents an organization or company produces for an external audience; these are *not* documents that are internally circulated (like a memo from one worker to co-workers).
>
> External communications can include posters, flyers, handouts, brochures, reports, “about us” statements, media releases, ads and commercials, signage, etc.
>
> **NOTE**

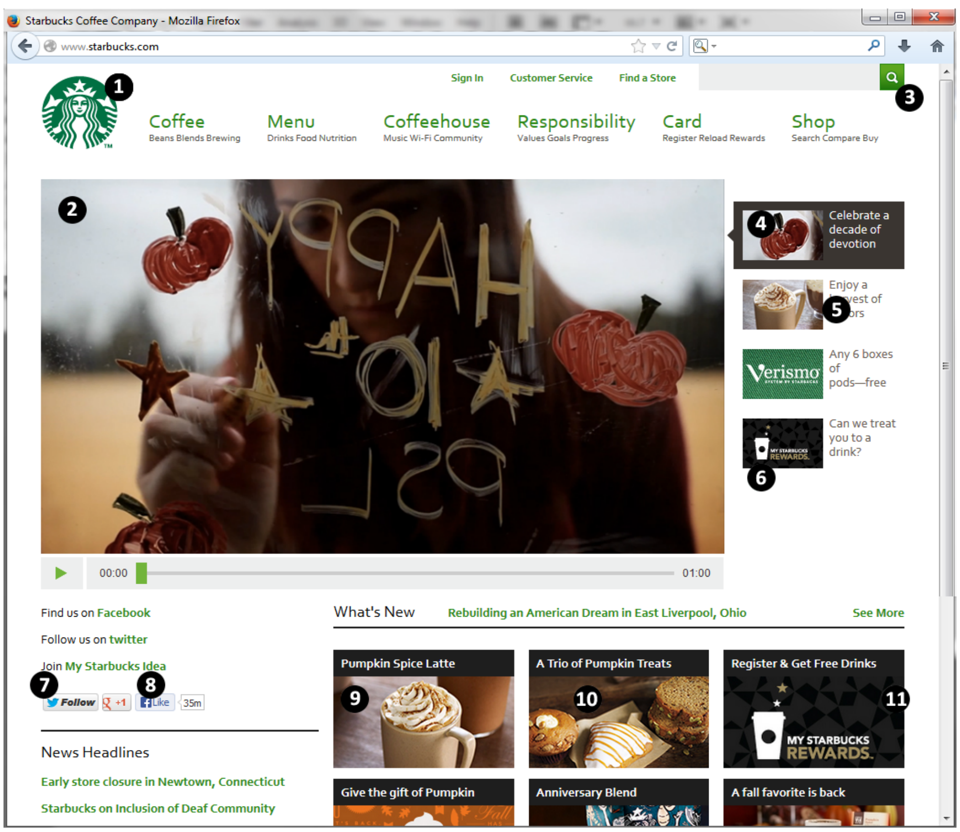
After you’ve gathered the materials, you will spend some time reviewing the documents and the visuals, and then focus on **three specific visuals**; you will then generate an analysis of those three specific visuals and some conclusions about the “work” these visuals do.

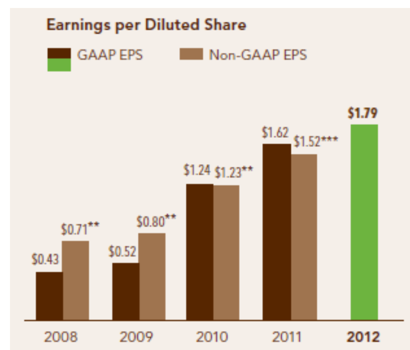
GETTING STARTED

First, identify the organization or company for which you want to perform a visual audit. Then identify which materials you need to gather and how you will need to go about gathering them.

For instance, if I chose Starbucks, I would go to the Starbucks on Grand River and gather example documents—like a nutrition information booklet, and maybe brochures about their charitable contributions. I would also go to the Starbucks web page and look for other external communication I want to analyze. So I might wind up with the following docs:

★ a Starbuck's "Nutrition by the Plate" tri-fold brochure
★ a Starbuck's "In Our Community" tri-fold brochure
★ a Starbuck's VISA card quad-fold brochure and application
★ the 2013 Starbuck's annual report
★ the home page of starbucks.com





The main page of starbucks.com (image to the left) includes 11 visuals (including the Twitter and Facebook icons, which weren't produced by Starbucks and don't directly represent Starbucks—and thus they wouldn't be visuals I would analyze for my report).

The image above is just *one* example visual from the Starbuck's 2013 annual report.

WRITING YOUR ANALYSIS

Once you've reviewed the documents and chosen the **three specific visuals** you want to analyze, you'll begin your analysis. There are many ways to conduct a rhetorical analysis, but for this assignment, you will analyze the pieces using the template doc for this module (module1_template.doc), which includes a four-fold analytical approach. For each visual you analyze, address the following questions:

WHAT is it? what type of visual?

WHERE does it appear? in what larger content and **context**?

HOW does it work? what does it do? what is its **purpose**?

WHY is it used? who seems to be the **audience**?

WRITING UP AND PRESENTING YOUR FINDINGS

Again, the product of this module is a 2–3 page report (using the template provided). The report should address:

1) The organization you selected and why you selected it.

2) The documents collected and why you selected them.

3) Your analysis of each of the three visuals, addressing the questions above.

4) A conclusion, providing some summary analysis and conclusions. So what did you find? What did you learn? How well do you think this organization has situated itself through and in the materials you've gathered?

Feel free to redesign the template in whatever way you think best to articulate your points and share your examples, but make sure to keep all of the core content. (You may add more columns or info, but please do not remove columns or categories.)

PREPARING TO WORKSHOP YOUR DOCUMENT

Bring a draft of your Module 1 to class with you on Wednesday, January 28. You will need an electronic copy of the document (so email it to yourself, save it on your Google Drive, or bring it on a jump drive). Before our workshopping session, think about what feedback would best help you polish and finalize your draft.

TURNING IN YOUR WORK AND GETTING CREDIT

Your final Module 1 report is due by midnight on Saturday, January 31, uploaded to D2L. Save your analysis doc with your last name and some sort of descriptive name (e.g., DeVoss_analysis.doc or DeVoss-module-1.pdf).

Upload your analysis to the "upload module 1 here" dropbox on our class D2L site.

Total points possible: 100.