Final Assignment:
DESIGN AND EVERYDAY LIFE IN WESTWOOD VILLAGE

Westwood Village, the university town around UCLA, is full of businesses. There are cafés, restaurants, shops of all kinds, offices, etc. You surely already know many of them. All these places are highly designed environments, including their furniture, signs and overall layouts. They are also branded to identify them and to attract customers.

The purpose of the final assignment is to analyze one of these designed environments, which you may freely choose. If you are uncertain about your choice, please ask the TAs. It is most fun and useful to do it with others. Form a group with maximum five (5) people (not more). If you have difficulties in finding others the TAs will help. Give your group a name, and select one person as the group leader. Have that person register the names of the group members by Tuesday, November 24, 11pm, on the class blog under Final Project groups. If you are the “lonely wolf” type, you may also do the assignment on your own, but that is not recommended. In that case, register only your own name.

Here is what you should do. First, walk around Westwood Village and find a business you are interested in analyzing. Visit it and study its features. If possible, photograph them, but remember that for indoor photography inside a private property you must ask for a permission. If you get no permission, you can make drawings. Observe the customers and the people working in the business. Make interviews if possible.

Discuss at least the following things (not necessarily in this order):

- What is the nature of the place or business?
- What historical design principles or movements may have influenced the design of this business? How?
- How are form and function related in the chosen place?
- How has the place been designed and why (in a semiotic sense)?
- How do its owners, managers and/or workers understand the designs?
- What designed features are well and/or poorly designed and why?
- What is their opinion of the clients of the business and its designs?
- How does the place or business express its branded identity?
- Is the use of the brand successful or not? Why?

The assignment must be in essay form (no lists of bullet points, please) and illustrated with pictures and/or diagrams. The text should be between 1200 and 2500 words long (typed and college level English, Chicago style or MLA). Refer to at least five articles from the Course Reader (you may use other texts too as background information). Use
references (notes), and provide a bibliography. You may add a DVD or web component, but that is not required.

The assignment must be in a folder with the project's title, group name, and the names and student IDs on the cover. It must be handed in for grading in the final meeting on December 4. Late entries will not be accepted. Plagiarism will not be tolerated.

CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU MUST DELIVER:

1. One text per group, together with illustrations (embedded in it or attached to it). The text and representations must be delivered in a folder. Folder cover must include title, group name, names and student IDs of the group members.

2. Every group member should print out one’s blog comments, sign them with one’s own name, student ID and TA’s name, and include them in the folder (this concerns every group member). The same should be done for write-ups for extra credit.

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LOGISTICS AND HINTS:

Choose your partners wisely—work with people of different skill sets. If you are without a group, try contacting groups with less than 5 members. You may contact your TA if you would like to join a group but cannot contact them. Please re-post the line-up of the group with the additional member(s) after you’ve made contact with your group. If you prefer to work alone, that is allowed.