

Woman's Place is in the Ford: Gender, Culture, and the Economy in the Post-war United States

Before Coming to Class:

Look at the assigned ads before class, and read over this assignment sheet.

Ads:

1. <https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/r4d796b0k>
2. <https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/r4mg7gq7q>
3. <https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/r4mk66858>
4. <https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/r4j96169v>
5. <https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/r4qv3d422>
6. <https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/r49s1mf1x>

In Class Activity:

Students will break out into assigned groups, each of which will be assigned one ad to discuss in depth, following the questions below, and will present their findings to the class. While each group will only present on one ad, they should look at all ads to better compare/contrast and discuss change over time.

Questions to Consider:

What do these advertisements reveal about the postwar US? (thinking of consumer culture, rise of the suburbs, baby boom, etc.) How were Ford cars marketed to women? To men? How did this change over time? (Or did it?) What does the way women are represented in these advertisements reveal about gender roles in the immediate post-war period (1945-1950)?

Learning Goals:

1. Students will recall the changes of the post-war period, including changes in gender roles, the rise of the suburbs, and the rise of consumerism.
2. Students will compare how women and men are portrayed in the different ads, as well as any changes in those portrayals between 1945 and 1950.
3. Students will analyze the United States's postwar economy, culture, and society.
4. Students will evaluate gender roles in the immediate postwar period, as they were tied to and influenced by economic, social, and cultural forces.