Consumer Culture--SOCY 49
Prof. Goodman

Course Description: This class will introduce you to the scholarly analysis of advertising and consumer culture. The purpose of this class is to encourage your creative inquiry through discussion and writing about the key social, moral, political and practical questions concerning consumer culture.

We will cover the following topics:
Emergence and History of Consumer Culture and how it differs from other cultures.
Economic System of Consumer Culture.
Acts of Consumption
Commodification of Everything. What is and is not for sale.
Consuming Culture. Popular Culture as a Commodity.
Culture of Advertising and Shopping.
Fashion and Advertising.
Politics in Consumer Culture.
Controlling Consumers.
Identity and Rebellion.
Materialism, Morality and Religion in Consumer Culture.
Community and Clustering.
Inequality in Consumer Culture.
Spread of Consumer Culture: Children and Globalization
Alternatives to Consumer Culture.

Grades: Your grade will depend on reading points, writing assignments and two exams, according to the following formula:

Reading Points 15%
Position Papers 1 20%
Position Papers 2 20%
Midterm Exam 20%
Final 25%

Incompletes will only be given when the student is otherwise passing the course and cannot complete it due to circumstances that are unforeseen and beyond the student's control.

Reading Points: I will provide reading points for most assignments. You will be graded on your ability to provide a summary of the author on those points when called on in class. Only students called on in class will be graded on that day. If you are absent on the day that I call on you without a university defined excuse, you will receive an 'F'. Since each student is likely to be called on only 3 or 4 times, it is important that you be prepared for every
class. I will give everyone one ‘free pass’ for the quarter on reading points. In other words, you can let me know that you will be unprepared to answer the reading points for that day. However, **you must do this before class starts**, either in person, phone message or email. You will not be given a free pass after I have called on you.

**Position Papers**: There will be two position papers one **due 7/19** and the other **due 8/16**. Fuller descriptions of these assignments will be provided.

**Midterm and Final Exam**: The midterm will be **7/24**. The exams will be short essays written in class. Most of the questions will be a variant of the reading points. One long essay question will come from a list of study questions that will be provided.

**Readings**: All readings will be provided as downloadable pdf's on Blackboard. Please let me know if you anticipate any problems with those formats and we will figure out an alternative.

**Help**: I will hold office hours Mon, Wed & Fri from 12:20 to 1:40 and from 2:50 to 3:30. I can also be reached by phone or email. I check my email often and it is my preferred mode of communication. Messages can also be left for me in the Sociology office.

Please let me know if you have any disabilities which will affect your participation in this class. I will make every effort to accommodate you.

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**Schedule**

*This schedule is provisional. The most current schedule will be on Blackboard*

**History of Consumer Culture**


"From Salvation to Self-Realization" in *The Culture of Consumption*. T. Lears 1983.
Economics of Consumer Sovereignty


Acts of Consumption


"Stylization of Consumption" in *Consumer Culture*. Celia Lury 2011

Commodification of Everything

"Commodification" Goodman written for class.

"Commodification as a Worldview" in *Contested Commodities*. Margaret Radin 1996.


Consuming Culture


"Commodities and Culture" in *Understanding Popular Culture*. John Fiske 1989.


**Culture of Advertising**


**Materialism & Morality**


"'Greed is Good' . . . or is it? Economic Ideology and Moral Tension in a Graduate School of Business" *Journal of Business Ethics* 11(2). Janet Walker 1992.

**Identity**


**Religion**


*Natural Blues*.mp3 on Blackboard. Moby.

*Natural Blues*.mp3 on Blackboard. Vera Hall.
Consumer Rebels


Consumer Politics

"Consumer Culture, Identity and Politics" in *Consumer Culture*. Celia Lury 2011


Social Connections through Consumption


Inequality in Consumer Culture


Spread of Consumer Culture

The Commercialization Of Childhood: Understanding The Problem And Finding Solutions" in *Psychology and Consumer Culture*. Diane Levin & Susan Linn 2004


Alternatives to Consumer Culture
