

General Elective

Winter 2016

Section: 01

AHSS 1050

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Academic Advisor:	General Elective Course. Please contact appropriate Academic Advisor within your program area.
Guelph Humber Website:	www.guelphhumber.ca

Course Title:	Sociology of Consumption
Pre-requisites:	None
Co-requisites:	None
Restrictions:	None
Credits:	0.50
Course Website (If applicable):	http://www.onlineguelphhumber.ca/
Method of Delivery:	3-0 (Lecture)

Calendar Description:

This course analyses the consumption of goods and services that is both the driver of our economy and a daily personal activity. Patterns of consumption vary according to class, ethnicity, and gender, and this course examines these differences in detail. The possibility of resistance to prevailing trends and the question of ecological constraints on consumption are probed as alternatives to the dominant mythology of the market. The growth of consumer culture is examined from a variety of classical and contemporary perspectives, including thinkers such as Marx, Weber, Veblen, Simmel, Adorno, Galbraith, and Bourdieu.

Course Learning Outcomes:

On completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Define consumerism, consumer society, and consumer culture and their functions within globalization.
2. Explain the theoretical perspectives and contributions made by thinkers such as Locke, Marx, Weber, Veblen, Adorno, Simmel, Galbraith, and Bourdieu.
3. Explain commodification and how it insinuates itself into our experience of everyday life, including the family, the body, our culture, other cultures, and nature.
4. Explain the pressure to commodify public goods such as education and health care.
5. Identify the trends that have led to critiques of consumer culture.
6. Assess the corporatization of public spaces and its implication for community.
7. Outline the transformation of art into entertainment into commodity.
8. Analyze the 'consuming machine' as a process of production and consumption, and the production of consumption through the manufacture of desire.
9. Identify the elements of McDonaldisation and Disney-fication in an increasingly rationalized, routinized, and homogenized North American culture.
10. Discuss shopping as a form of self-expression and the resulting purchases as a means of communicating identity, status, and power.
11. Discuss how patterns of consumption are gendered and racialized.
12. Identify the marketing myths which seek to create and assert cultural values through commodities.
13. Assess the manner in which consumption normalizes competition among individuals and different social groups.
14. Analyze commodity signs as a language of conceptual building blocks.
15. Apply structural and phenomenological theories to subcultures and their differing patterns of consumption.
16. Analyze the roles of education, family, and class in the economy of "cultural capital."
17. Outline how consumer society "guides" the developing child along the path from childhood to young consumer.
18. Identify ways in which efforts to resist commodification are appropriated by the marketing industry.
19. Analyze and evaluate the methods of opposing consumer society through subvertising, uncooling, downsizing, and demarketing.

Learning Resources

Required Textbook(s):

Title: The Consumer Society Reader
Author: Juliet B. Schor & Douglas B. Holt
Edition: New Press: New York, 2000
ISBN: 9781565845985
Publisher: The New Press

Supplementary Text/other:

N/A

Course Schedule

Lesson/ Week	Topic	Readings/Activities
Jan. 12	Introduction to the Course	Introduction Galbraith, "The Dependence Effect" (pp. 20-25)
Jan. 19	The Critique of Consumerism	Adorno & Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry" (pp. 3-19). Marx, "The Fetishism of the Commodity and Its Secret" (pp. 331-342).
Jan. 26	Consumption and Social Relationships I	Veblen, "Conspicuous Consumption" (pp. 187-204). Jean Baudrillard, "The Ideological Genesis of Needs" (pp. 57-80).
Feb. 2	Consumption and Social Relationships II	Pierre Bourdieu, "The Aesthetic Sense as the Sense of Distinction (205-211). Stuart Ewen, "Images without Bottom" (47-54).
Feb. 9	Consumption and Advertising	Frank, "Advertising as Cultural Criticism" (375-394). Goldman and Papson, "Advertising in the Age of Accelerated Meaning" (81-98). Assignment #1 due
Winter Break		
Feb. 23	MIDTERM EXAM	MIDTERM EXAM (25%)
Mar. 1	Consumption and Social Relationships III (Gender)	Friedan, "The Sexual Sell" (pp. 3-19). Bordo, "Hunger as Ideology" (pp. 99-114).
Mar. 8	Consumption and Social Relationships IV (Race)	Ann Ducille, "Toy Theory: Black Barbie and the Deep Play of Difference" (pp. 259-278). bell hooks, "Eating the Other" (pp. 343-359).
Mar. 15	The Commodification of Cool	Alex Kotlowitz, "False Connections" (pp. 253-258). Malcolm Gladwell, "The Coolhunt" (pp. 360-374).
Mar. 22	Consumption and the Counterculture	Lasn, "Culture Jamming" (pp. 414-432). Elgin "Voluntary Simplicity" (pp. 397-413).
Mar. 29	The Liberatory Dimension of Consumerism	Fiske, "Shopping for Pleasure: Malls, Power and Resistance" (pp. 306-328).
Apr. 5	Critique of the Liberal Subject/Consumer; Ecology and Consumerism	Schor, "Towards a New Politics of Consumption" (pp. 446-462). Assignment #2 due
Final Exam – (to be scheduled within final exam period) Please check www.guelphhumber.ca for exam schedules		

Evaluation and Due Dates

Students will be evaluated in this course through:

ASSIGNMENT 1 (Feb. 10):	20%
MIDTERM EXAM (FEB. 24):	25%
ASSIGNMENT 2 (Apr. 6):	25%
FINAL EXAM (final exam period):	30%
TOTAL	100%

NOTE: All final exams are 2 hours in length and will be scheduled by Registrarial Services and available online at <http://guelphhumber.ca/registrar/schedules>

Policy for Late Work

All papers must be submitted in class on the due date (due dates are specified in the Reading Schedule) in hard copy format. E-mailed papers will not be accepted. Late assignments receive a penalty of 5% per day (including weekends). Assignments will NOT be accepted any later than 7 days after the due date.

Drop Box Policy

If late submissions are permitted by the late policy of this course outline, such assignments submitted after the due date must be electronically date stamped and placed in the secure assignment drop box, located on the second floor in the Learning Commons.

NOTE: The University of Guelph-Humber Undergraduate Calendar states:

“Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.”

Accordingly, instructors may decide to use originality checking services, such as Turnitin.com, to ensure that submitted work conforms to the university’s Academic Misconduct policy. The instructor will notify students of such a requirement in advance. More information on Academic Misconduct is included below in this outline.

Academic Policies

Important University of Guelph-Humber Academic Regulations

Academic Integrity / Academic Honesty

Academic misconduct is behaviour that erodes the basis of mutual trust on which scholarly exchanges commonly rest, undermines the University's exercise of its responsibility to evaluate students' academic achievements, or restricts the University's ability to accomplish its learning objectives.

The University takes a serious view of academic misconduct and will severely penalize students, faculty and staff who are found guilty of offences associated with misappropriation of others' work, misrepresentation of personal performance and fraud, improper access to scholarly resources, and obstructing others in pursuit of their academic endeavours. In addition to this policy, the University has adopted a number of policies that govern such offences, including the policies on Misconduct in Research and Scholarship and the Student Rights and Responsibilities regulations. These policies will be strictly enforced.

It is the responsibility of the University, its faculty, students and staff to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible through establishment and use of policies and preventive procedures to limit the likelihood of offences occurring. Furthermore, individual members of the University community have the specific responsibility of initiating appropriate action in all instances where academic misconduct is believed to have taken place. This responsibility includes reporting such offences when they occur and making one's disapproval of such behaviour obvious.

University of Guelph-Humber students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students should also be aware that if they find their academic performance affected by medical, psychological or compassionate circumstances, they should inform the appropriate individuals, (instructors, Academic Advisor) and follow the available procedures for academic consideration outlined in the University's calendar.

Students are encouraged to review the policy:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/guelphhumber/current/c07/c07-amisconduct.shtml>

Grading Procedures

Feedback to students on work completed or in progress is an integral part of teaching and learning in that it allows students to measure their understanding of material and their progress on learning objectives. Feedback often goes beyond grading-an indication of the standard achieved-to include comments on the particular strengths and weaknesses of a student's performance. While the nature and frequency of such feedback will vary with the course, the University of Guelph is committed to providing students with appropriate and timely feedback

on their work. Instructors must provide meaningful and constructive feedback prior to the 40th class day. This may include but is not exclusive to returning papers, assignments, in-class or laboratory quizzes, laboratory reports, or mid-term examinations prior to the 40th class day. In research and independent study courses, instructors must provide students with a realistic idea of their performance by discussing progress directly with the student and, if necessary, identify specific areas for improvement. This may include the assessment of a research plan, literature review, annotated bibliography, oral presentation or other assessment tools.

Missed Final Exams / Deferred Privileges

When students do not write a required final examination, complete a final assignment, or complete a work term report prior to the last class date, they must request Academic Consideration to be considered for a deferred privilege. When granted, a deferred privilege allows a student the opportunity to complete the final course requirements after the end of the semester, but during established timelines.

Please note that faculty members do not grant deferred privileges. Faculty can only grant academic consideration for work that is due during the semester and cannot grant extensions beyond their deadline for submission of final grades.

The nature of the deferred privilege may take the form of either a deferred condition or a deferred examination. The Admissions and Academic Review Sub-Committee grants deferred privileges on the basis of **medical**, **psychological** or **compassionate** consideration. Please see your Admission and Program advisor for details.

Accommodation Procedures

Students will identify themselves to Accessibility Learning Services and, where required, provide appropriate documentation of their need. Where appropriate, students will inform individual instructors of their disabilities and academic accommodations required, by distributing an "***Accommodation Letter***".

When students require test accommodations, they will

- Remind instructors at least **one week in advance** of each test or as soon as possible, that they require test accommodation.
- Book the test date and time in the Accessibility Learning Services office or make the appropriate arrangements to write in the Test Centre at least one week in advance of each test, or as soon as possible.

Students with special needs are accommodated through Humber ITAL Accessibility Learning Services. Students should make themselves familiar with the policies relating to special accommodations by visiting the website at: <http://www.humber.ca/student-life/swac/accessible-learning>

It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the University's policies and Academic Regulations. These policies can be found at: <http://www.guelphhumber.ca/registrar/policies>