HIST 3327: Consumer Culture in Modern Europe
Lisa Tiersten
Fall 2019
Wednesdays, 2:10-4:00
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Office hours: Milstein 819, Mondays, 2:00-4:00 and by appointment

Course description:
This seminar explores the development of consumer capitalism in modern Europe from the eighteenth century to the present, primarily in Britain and France. Topics to be covered include the rise of a market economy and culture, urbanization and the commercial metropolis, changing attitudes toward shopping and spending, the construction of modern gender and class identities through consumption, credit and social trust, and the relationship between consumption and democratic citizenship. Readings will be drawn from history as well as from social theory and cultural studies.

Course requirements:
1. Informed class participation (25% of final grade).
2. 1/2-1 page of comments on the reading, to be posted on Canvas no later than 12 pm Wednesday afternoon (20% of grade). Students are entitled to two posting “vacations,” but must let me know in advance.
3. Moderation of the discussion for one reading, together with one other student (20% of grade).
4. A 15-page research paper (35% of final grade). Students will hand in a brief prospectus on October 16 and a bibliography for the paper on October 30. All students should plan to meet with me in mid-October and again in mid-November to discuss their progress. Due Monday, December 9.

Course materials:
The readings for the course are posted on Canvas. Readings are also on reserve at the Barnard Library (note that essays in edited volumes will be categorized by the editor of the volume, not the author of the assigned essay).
I. The Emergence of a Market Economy and Society

1. September 4: Introduction to the Course: Defining Consumer Culture  
   Texts: Raymond Williams, “Consumption,” Keywords.

2. September 11: Markets and Material Culture in Early Modern Europe  

   Rosalind Williams, Dream Worlds, Ch. 2, “The Closed World of Courtly Consumption.”  
II. Consumption in the Age of the Bourgeoisie

David Pinkney, Napoleon III and the Rebuilding of Paris, Ch. 1, “Paris in 1850.”
Philip Nord, Paris Shopkeepers and the Politics of Resentment, Ch. 3, “Haussmannization.”
Emile Zola, The Ladies’ Paradise (1883), Ch. 9.
Slides: the nineteenth-century city; nineteenth-century shops and department stores; advertising.

5. October 2: Spectator and Selfhood in the Nineteenth-Century City
Texts: Ellen Moers, The Dandy, Ch. 1, “Brummell.”
Slides: fashion plates

6. October 9: Gender, Class, and Consumption in the Nineteenth Century
Deborah Cohen, Household Gods, Ch. 4, “In Possession: Men, Women and Decoration.”
Thorstein Veblen, The Theory of the Leisure Class (1899), Ch. 4, “Conspicuous Consumption.”
Guy de Maupassant, “The Necklace” (1884), Collected Short Stories.
Tammy Whitlock, Crime, Gender, and Consumer Culture in Nineteenth-
Century England, Ch. 7, “Solving the Problem of the Criminal Consumer.”

Slides: bourgeois interiors

7. October 16: Debt, Credit, and Social Trust in the Nineteenth Century


Paul Johnson, *Saving and Spending: The Working-Class Economy in Britain, 1870-1930*, Ch. 6, “Credit.”


***Submit paper prospectus via e-mail (no attachments, please)***

8. October 23: Empire and the Market


Joanna de Groot, “Metropolitan Desires and Colonial Connections: Reflections on Consumption and Empire,” in *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World*, eds., Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose.

Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, Ch. 1, “The Empire’s Old Clothes: Fashioning the Colonial Subject.”


*Slides:* empire and consumption

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III. Consumption and Cultural Crisis in the Twentieth Century
9. October 30: The Interwar Period: Mass Consumption and its Discontents

Hartmut Berghoff, “Enticement and Deprivation: The Regulation of Consumption in Pre-war Nazi Germany,” in *The Politics of Consumption*, eds., Martin Daunton and Matthew Hilton.

*Slides:* Advertising

***Submit 1-page paper bibliography via e-mail (no attachments, please)***

***The Marriage of Maria Braun (Fassbinder, 1978)***

Wednesday, 10/30, 7:30-9:30 pm, Milstein Center Lower Level 002

10. November 6: Citizenship and Consumption in the Postwar Era


*The Marriage of Maria Braun* (Fassbinder, 1979).
IV. Contemporary Consumption

11. November 13: Consumption in the Late Capitalist World

John Fiske, *Reading the Popular*, Ch. 2, “Shopping for Pleasure.”
Alice Marwick, *Status Update: Celebrity, Publicity, and Branding in the Social Media Age*, Ch. 5, “Lifestreaming: We Live in Public.”

***Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price (Greenwald, 2005)***

Tues., 11/19, 7-9 pm, Milstein 202


*Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price* (Greenwald, 2005).
Elizabeth Currid-Halkett, *The Sum of Small Things*, Ch. 5, “Conspicuous Production.”

***Thanksgiving Break***

13. December 4: Can Money Buy Everything?


***Paper due Monday, December 9th***
Faculty Statement on Academic Integrity
The intellectual venture in which we are all engaged requires of faculty and students alike the highest level of personal and academic integrity. As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity. Scholarship, by its very nature, is an iterative process, with ideas and insights building one upon the other. Collaborative scholarship requires the study of other scholars’ work, the free discussion of such work, and the explicit acknowledgement of those ideas in any work that inform our own. This exchange of ideas relies upon a mutual trust that sources, opinions, facts, and insights will be properly noted and carefully credited.
In practical terms, this means that, as students you must be responsible for the full citations of others’ ideas in all of your research papers and projects; you must be scrupulously honest when taking your examinations; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent.
Any breach of this intellectual responsibility is a breach of faith with the rest of our academic community. It undermines our shared intellectual culture, and it cannot be tolerated. Students failing to meet these responsibilities should anticipate being asked to leave Columbia.

Disability-Related Accommodations:
In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations, students must first be registered with Disability Services (DS). More information on the DS registration process is available online at www.health.columbia.edu/ods. Faculty must be notified of registered students’ accommodations before exam or other accommodations will be provided. Students who have (or think they may have) a disability are invited to contact Disability Services for a confidential discussion at (212) 854-2388 (Voice/TTY) or by email at disability@columbia.edu