

<b>CAPILANO UNIVERSITY</b>			
<b>COURSE OUTLINE</b>			
<b>TERM:</b>	<b>Fall 2015</b>	<b>COURSE NO:</b>	<b>SOC 300</b>
<b>INSTRUCTOR:</b>		<b>COURSE NAME:</b>	<b>THE SOCIOLOGY OF CONSUMER CULTURE</b>
<b>OFFICE:</b>	<b>LOCAL:</b>	<b>SECTION NO:</b>	<b>CREDITS: 3</b>
<b>E-MAIL:</b>			

**COURSE FORMAT:** Three hours of class time, with an additional hour delivered through on-line or other activities, for 15 weeks.

**COURSE PREREQUISITES:** 45 credits of 100-level or higher coursework including 3 credits of SOC.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** This course looks at the construction of consumer culture in contemporary society. Specific attention is paid to the processes by which consumer society is created, reproduced and sustained through the media and advertising. It will examine the processes by which the role of the consumer is created and the impacts and implications for personal identity and society as a whole. This course is situated in the historical and current debates on ideology, political economy and capitalism as well as the social construction perspective.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** Ritzer, George. (2005) *Enchanting a Disenchanted World*. 2nd Ed. Pine Forge Press: University Maryland.  
Yu, Lianne. (2014) *Consumption in China*. Polity Press: MA

**REQUIRED READINGS:** Additional required readings will be made available through either moodle or library databases (JSTOR)

**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Discuss and exchange ideas on the historical development of consumer culture.
2. Use the sociological method to think critically about the effects of consumerism on personal identity, the production and reproduction of social norms and values, and social institutions.
3. Apply categories of race, class, gender and age to a sociological analysis of consumerism.
4. Analyze the social meaning behind consumerism and commodities.
5. Evaluate attempts to influence social change through either consumer activism or resistance to consumerism.
6. Take a leadership role in group and seminar discussions
7. Communicate complex ideas to others through discussion, written reports and presentations.

**Fourth Hour:** Students are expected to spend one hour on the on-line Moodle forum at the end of each week reviewing and reflecting on that week's readings, discussions and videos.

**COURSE CONTENT:**

Week	Date	Content/Readings
1		<p><b>Introduction to Sociology of Consumer Culture</b>  <b>Tue: Intro to the class</b>  <b>Read Ritzer: Chapter 1</b> A tour of the new means of consumption  <b>Read Yu: 1-17</b> (China's transition from socialism to consumerism)</p> <p><i>Hand out assignment #1 Paper: <b>Cathedrals of Consumption fieldwork</b></i></p>
2		<p><b>Spaces of Consumption:</b> the new landscape of consumption- from private to corporate  <b>Read Ritzer: Chapter 2</b>  <b>Read Yu: 31-60</b>  <b>Read Doreen Massey: on moodle</b></p>
3		<p>Malls and the <b>Historical Development of Consumer Culture</b>  Cohen, L. <i>From Town Centre To Shopping Center</i>  <b>Paper #1 Cathedrals Due</b></p>
4		<p><b>Consumption Theories</b>  <b>Read: Ritzer: Chapter 3</b> Social Theory and the new means of consumption  <b>Read: Yu Pages 17-30</b> Applying Consumption theory</p> <p><i>Hand out Assignment Paper #2: Meaning</i></p>
5		<p><b>Status: I am what I buy</b>  <b>Be prepared to discuss</b> field trip results  <b>Read Yu: 61-92</b></p> <p><b>Read Veblen: page 7-69</b> The Theory of the Leisure class  <b>Watch: Affluenza</b></p>
6		No class: Reading Break
7		<p><b>Distinction and Taste: How is taste made? What is cool/hot what is not?</b>  <b>Read: Bourdieu "The Aesthetic Sense as the Sense of Distinction" (m)</b>  <i>Baudrillard (m)</i>  <b>Meaning Paper Due</b>  <b>Hand Out assignment Paper #3 Status</b></p>
8		<p><b>Lifestyles</b>  Read Yu: 93-121  <b>Read: de Certeau</b> The Practice of Everyday life (m)  <b>Read: Seth Godin</b> Neo Tribes (m)  <b>Read: Fiske</b> "Shopping for Pleasure: Malls, Power and Resistance" (m)</p>
9		<p><b>Commodification and everything:</b> What are the constraints that limit human agency?  Hegemony, Ideology and the Manufacturing of desire  <b>Read Ritzer</b> Enchanting a Disenchanted World p 173-210  <b>Read Yu: 122-148</b>  <b>Status Paper Due</b></p>
10		<p>Commodification, Identity and Art and everything else  Georg Simmel and the philosophy of money  Instagram and Amalia Ulman, Max Haivin and the Threat of money</p> <p><b>Commoditizing Life: A Case Study in the Branding of water</b>  Wilk, 2006 "Bottled Water: The Pure commodity in the Age of Branding" (m)</p>
11		<p><b>Consumer Agency and Acts of Resistance</b>  Watch: "Exit Through The Gift Shop"  Twitchell: "Two Cheers for Materialism" (m)  Friedman "On promoting a sustainable future through consumer activism" Journal of Social Issues (m)</p>
12		<p><b>Consumer Agency and Acts of Resistance</b>  Tuesday Kozinets and Handelman "Adversaries of Consumption"  J of Consumer research (JSTOR)</p>

Week	Date	Content/Readings
13		Review: <i>Social Life of a Commodity Paper/Presentation Due</i>
14 & 15		<b>Exam Period</b>

**EVALUATION PROFILE:**

Assignment #1	Meaning Paper: .....	15%
Assignment #2	Cathedrals Paper .....	15%
Assignment #3	Status Paper .....	15%
Assignment #4	Social Life of a Commodity Paper/ Presentation .....	15%
4th hour	.....	10%
Final Exam	.....	30%
Total	.....	100%

**GRADING PROFILE:**

A+ = 90 - 100%	B+ = 77 - 79%	C+ = 67 - 69%	D = 50 - 59%
A = 85 - 89%	B = 73 - 76%	C = 63 - 66%	F = 0 - 49%
A- = 80 - 84%	B- = 70 - 72%	C- = 60 - 62%	

**OPERATIONAL DETAILS:**

*Capilano University has policies on Academic Appeals (including appeal of final grade), Student Conduct, Cheating and Plagiarism, Academic Probation and other educational issues. These and other policies are available on the University website.*

**Attendance:**

This class will be delivered as a discussion-based seminar. Regular attendance and active prepared participation is mandatory. Attendance will be taken and you will be expected to come to class having read and taken extensive notes on all the required readings. It is recommended that you make note of all the main points and arguments in each reading with specific attention paid to points of overlaps between readings and videos. Also you should come to class with a list of questions you wish to discuss for further clarification and points that you have made in response to your own ideas and reactions to the material. You must come to class ready to give in-class summaries of that weeks' readings if asked to do so.

**Fourth Hour:**

Students are expected to respond to the on-line Moodle forum in a timely manner. They will be collected and marked as a body of work at the end of the term for 10% of the grade.

**Missed Exams:**

**The Final Exam for Sociology 300 is a cumulative exam worth 30% of the total grade.** It can be made-up only if the student receives permission from the instructor prior to the scheduled sitting of the exam. The Instructor reserves the right to request a medical certificate to verify illness.

**Late Assignments:**

Papers handed in after the due date will be considered late and will be **penalized 5%** per day. All papers must be handed to the instructor.

**Incomplete Grades:**

Incomplete grades are not given unless under VERY special circumstances.

**English Usage:**

No assignment requiring extensive correction of grammar will be accepted. Any student anticipating problems should make an appointment at the English Writing Centre Fourth floor in fir Building.

**Electronic Devices:**

No personal electronic devices (cell phones, pagers, calculators, electronic dictionaries, etc...) may be used during an examination unless prior approval

from the instructor. During an exam, turn off all cell phones and pagers and remove them from the desk.

***Emergency Procedures:***

Please read the emergency procedures posted on the wall of the classroom.