

HIS 350-R 39420
M 3-6p GAR 0.132
FALL 2012
Dr. Restad

CONSUMING AMERICA

A half-century ago the historian David Potter argued in *People of Plenty* that American abundance played a crucial role in creating and sustaining American democracy. More recently, historians have highlighted the role of consumption in shaping all aspects of American society. This course will explore the history of the relationship between the American consumer and the nation's social history. It will address such topics as the use of colonial boycotts to challenge British political control, the impact of the rise of a mass market at the end of the 19th century, and the making of a middle-class society in the twentieth century. It will examine issues concerning women shoppers (and shoplifters), the immigrant experience, ideas about the morality and the meaning of spending, and advertising's role in shaping the American economy and society. This is a seminar. Expect to talk.

Professor

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Office hours:	T/Th 11-12:30p	GAR 2.144

REQUIRED READING

Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic*
Cross, *All-Consuming Century*
Leach, *Land of Desire*
Schor and Holt, *The Consumer Society Reader*
Additional readings posted on Blackboard

COURSE GOALS

Comprehend, ponder, and discuss key ideas, events, and interpretations relating to the history of consumerism.
Participate fully and effectively in seminar discussions and projects.
Write (and rewrite) analytical papers that reflect independent thinking and sound use of evidence.
Present ideas effectively using formal oral and visual formats.

ASSIGNMENTS, CIVILITY, GRADING, ABSENCES, ETC.

Syllabus, announcements, course revisions, and other course related material are posted on Blackboard. No hard copy will be distributed.

ABSENCE. You may miss one class meeting for any reason. Any additional absence will result in one-half grade deducted from your final course grade for each day missed. Do not ask for exceptions. It is your personal and social responsibility to attend each class, be on time, and stay for the entire class. Late arrival, early departure, ringing cell phones, texting, tweeting, surfing, FB'ing, sleeping, etc. distract and disrupt the entire class. Your courtesy is necessary and appreciated.

GRADES will be determined on the basis class participation and attendance (15%), short papers (35%), a collaborative visual presentation (5%) and a 7 to 10-page research paper (assembled in stages: preparation, 10%, oral presentation, 5%, final paper, 30%) (45%). Plus and minus will be used in assigning a course grade. Grades will not be posted on Blackboard. Please feel free to

ask for a printed update at any time (but keep in mind that these cannot be emailed because of FERPA rules).

FORMAT requirements. Send all written work via .docx format. Title the document **350.LASTNAME.DATE**. For example: **350.Smithers.Sept4**. The paper itself must be double-spaced, 12-point, normal font, and have a title, page numbers, your name on *each* page, and the date. You must follow this form, as it allows me to sort email efficiently and comment effectively on your work. All written papers will be emailed, unless otherwise noted, at least 60 minutes before class begins. Late papers (arriving after 2:05 p, Monday) will be docked one half grade for the next 24 hours, after which one full grade will be deducted for each late day. You must complete all assignments to the professor's standards to pass the course, regardless of lateness.

ACADEMIC HONESTY. Plagiarism or any action that violates the letter and intent of the policies is explained fully here http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/spot_honorcode.php, will be punished to the fullest extent possible, up to and including failing the course and suspension from UT.

ASSISTANCE. Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259 <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>. Students seeking assistance with writing may wish to contact The Undergraduate Writing Center <http://uwc.utexas.edu/handouts>. Medical assistance/ counseling services are available at <http://www.cmhc.utexas.edu/>. If you have concerns about the behavior or well-being of another member of the campus community, call BCAL at 512-232-5050. www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS

All reading and written work will be completed before coming to class on the dates listed. Written work will be submitted in the required format. This syllabus is a general guideline; the sequence, topics, and dates are subject to change. Check Blackboard frequently.

WEEK I No meeting.

WEEK II Sep 3 **LABOR DAY**. No Class. Paper due 9.05.12 by 5 p.
WRITE a list of three strengths you believe that your writing exhibits. List two areas in which you'd like to improve your skills. (Just to help out: do not list grammar and proof reading). You may wish to consult the classic *Elements of Style* for help.
<http://www.bartleby.com/141/>

WEEK III Sep 10
Marx, "The Fetishism of the Commodity and Its Secret"
Baudrillard, "The Ideological Genesis of Needs"
Veblen, "Conspicuous Consumption"

PAPER. Write a one-page paper explaining one of the author's essays. Write the author and title on the first line of text (beneath your paper's title). See format requirements on the syllabus.

IMAGE. Bring to class one magazine or newspaper advertisement that illustrates the author's basic idea. For example, an image of a new car might be used to explain "conspicuous consumption." (Don't over worry this point. Find what you think is a useable image, and we'll try to decode it in class.)

WEEK IV Sep 17
Axtell, "The First Consumer Revolution"
Breen, "Baubles of Britain"
Bourdieu, "The Aesthetic Sense as Sense of Distinction"

PAPER. Write one paragraph (maximum 100 words each) explaining the main argument for *each* of the readings. Write the title and author at top of each paragraph. Don't forget to number pages.

WEEK V Sep 24
Leach, *Land of Desire*. Intro. Chapters 1,2,3

PAPER. Three distinct "talking points" or questions to raise in discussion. Email according to syllabus.

*PRESENTATION. Department Store interiors, assorted dates.

WEEK VI Oct 1
Leach, *Land of Desire*, Chapters 7, 8

PAPER. Write a one-page paper that summarizes and critiques the thesis of Leach's book. You may find this helpful.

<http://apps.carleton.edu/curricular/history/study/criticalbookreview/>

PRESENTATION. Images of interiors of Wannamakers and Marshall Fields suggesting religious themes. Remaining images from magazine or newspaper advertisements the associate products with becoming a better person.

WEEK VII Oct 8
Campbell, "Consuming Goods and the Good of Consuming"
Abelson, *When Ladies Go A-Thieving* (excerpts)

PAPER: One to two-page paper that discusses Campbell's idea in relation to Marx, Bourdieu, Veblen, or Baudrillard (from Weeks I & II)

PRESENTATION. Advertisements from early 20th century and early 21st century illustrating Campbell's ideas.

WEEK VIII Oct 15
Cross, *All-Consuming Century*, Intro. – p. 67
Cohen, *Consumers' Republic*, Part 1

PAPER. Write a short paper that begins: "When I sit down with Cohen and Cross, I want to ask them one thing." The remainder of your paper will explain why your question is important.

PRESENTATION. Advertisements from popular magazines, 1900-1940.

WEEK IX Oct 22 [an advertising break]
Turbin, "Fashioning the American Man"
Breazeale, "In Spite of Women"
Frank, "Advertising as Cultural Criticism"

Goldman and Papson, "Advertising in the Age of Accelerated Meaning"

PAPER. Write a paragraph summary of each article.

PRESENTATION. Advertisements from popular magazines, 1932-40 reflecting Depression era.

WEEK X Oct 29
Cross, *All-Consuming Century*, pp. 67-111.
Cohen, *Consumers' Republic*, Part 2.
Landay, "Millions Love Lucy"

PAPER. Three distinct "talking points," or questions to raise in discussion. Email according to syllabus.

PRESENTATION. Advertisements from popular magazines, 1940-1960, that reflect ideas in Cross and Cohen. One television ad may be included.

WEEK XI Nov 5
Cross, *All-Consuming Century*, 111-45.
Adorno, "The Culture Industry"

PAPER. Write a 250-word review of Cross's book.

PRESENTATION. Advertisements from popular magazines, 1950-1975 that depict gender identities.

WEEK XII Nov 12
Prepare for final paper and presentation. Submit title, paper topic, one-paragraph description, 6 sources of information. These will be critiqued in groups.

WEEK XIII Nov 19
Cohen, *Consumers' Republic*, Part 3

PAPER. Cohen may be optimistic about the role of the citizen as consumer, or she might not be. Write a 100-150 word paper arguing for one position.

PRESENTATION. Advertisements from popular magazines, 1970 to 2000, that concern either (choose only one) globalization or environmental concerns

WEEK XIV Nov 26
PAPER PRESENTATIONS

WEEK XV Dec 3
PAPER PRESENTATIONS

FINAL PAPER: due December 10 by 5 pm. No late papers will be accepted. Do not ask for extensions.

The syllabus, lectures, and exams that comprise this course are the property of P. Restad and are for the exclusive use of those enrolled in this specific class for use in this specific class. They may not be shared, reproduced or summarized in any form, including electronically, partially or in full, without the professor's express, written permission.

* Weekly Presentation Guidelines

Two or more people will make a short presentation (15-20 minutes) of primary source images related to the week's reading. The presentation should reference previous reading and discussion, and should draw the class into your discussion and analysis.

Sign up for presentation by week III. We will discuss sources for images in class.

1. Arrange 8-12 carefully selected images according to, for example, a chronology, theme, or contrast that you wish to bring to the class' attention.
2. Be ready to relate the images to previous reading/ discussion (presenters' discussion).
3. Have prepared at least three questions you will raise to promote class discussion.
4. Use powerpoint or document camera, or provide printed handouts of images for each member of the class.
5. Turn in a list with description of images (or images of them) and their sources. Follow the guidelines for crediting sources using Chicago Manual of Style. Noodlebib will help.
<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/noodlebib/>
6. Classmates will evaluate the presentation at its conclusion.